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STUDIES IN EPHESIANS.



BY

✓
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Ἐν τοῖς ἑπουρανίοις.

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TO

Col. Bennett H. Young, the distinguished layman who conceived and made possible the Kentucky scheme of synodical evangelism whence have flowed so many streams of blessing to refresh and gladden our Southern Zion, this volume is inscribed

BY THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE desire expressed by Mrs. W. C. Buchanan of Nayoga, Japan, to possess the study entitled, "The Whole Armor of God," first suggested the publication of this little volume. The wishes of one who has so beautifully given her accomplished life to the Master, were not to be disregarded. Others of my congregation also have indicated that they would be pleased to possess these discourses in a permanent form.

Distrust of my ability to edify the public would have prevented this venture but for the kindness of Prof. J. A. Quarles, D. D., of Washington and Lee University, in carefully examining the manuscript and pronouncing a very favorable judgment upon it.

Rev. William Dinwiddie, D. D., and Rev. Peyton H. Hoge, D. D., also examined the manuscript and made valuable suggestions. Approval from such eminent authorities induced the author to believe that these studies might be of service to God's people.

These discourses are the work of a busy pastor. They were intended for the people of his own charge, with no thought of their ever being under the eye of the general public. No efforts at scholarship were made, and now they are given to the publishers as written for his Wednesday evening lectures ; amid the press of duties, time fails to make many improvements that could be desired.

Every work upon Ephesians within the author's reach has been laid under tribute, and the results of the work are given without its processes. Without endorsing the peculiar views of

any, the best things in Ellicott, Meyer, Eadie, Alford, Darby, and Calvin have been considered, and in many places wrought out in the studies. It is hoped that the good sense of Ellicott, the acuteness of Meyer, the spirituality of Darby, and the orthodoxy of Calvin have to some extent at least impressed themselves upon this little work. Hence the reader will see that originality has not been aimed at, that the appearance of technical learning has been avoided, and that the only endeavor has been to give the people the true meaning of God's spirit in this Epistle. ✓

It has been very gratifying, while pursuing these studies in biblical theology, to find the conclusions of a mature exegesis of the Scriptures, every word of which is God's inspired revelation, confirming the system of Divinity received from the lips of the illustrious Dr. Dabney who adorned the chair of systematic theology in Union Seminary while the writer attended that seat of learning. Modern biblical theology establishes the truths set forth in the Westminster Confession, and greets systematic theology as queen of the sciences.

Should this little work call the attention of my young brethren in the ministry to the expository method of treating God's truth in homiletic work, or profit God's people in their devotional study of this precious portion of His word, my prayers will have been answered.

Waynesboro, Va., Sept. 1, 1892.

CONTENTS.

I.	GOD'S PURPOSE TOWARD US IN CHRIST.....	9
II.	PRAYER TO THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.	24
III.	ONE NEW MAN.....	37
IV.	PRAYER TO THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.....	52
V.	PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH.....	64
VI.	THE CHRISTIAN WALK.....	75
VII.	IMITATORS OF GOD.....	87
VIII.	THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE OF THE HEAVENLIES.....	98
IX.	CHRIST AND THE CHURCH....	112
X.	THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.....	124



GOD'S PURPOSE TOWARD US IN CHRIST.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, 1 : 1-14.

*"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself,"—
Eph. 1 : 9.*

THIS portion of the precious word dwells upon the purpose of God in regard "to the saints" and "to the faithful in Christ Jesus."¹ "The faithful in Christ Jesus" are those who believe in Christ Jesus. Their state and condition is thus noted, as well as the blessed sphere of their existence. The Apostle does not speak much of the means of their salvation, but of the blessedness in which God has placed them in the counsels of grace. It is blessed to learn the means of our redemption, but it must be more so to have our minds occupied with the source and end of it all. God's purpose is the source and eternal blessedness in Christ the end. The true character of the Christian is only found in those things to which he is called. In this calling he enjoys God himself, being brought so near to Him that we know His thoughts and counsels. The soul is lifted to God, and moves in the sphere of His thoughts and intentions. Thus

¹ Eph. 1 : 1.

we learn what is pleasing to Him, and what is worthy of Him. Hence, character is given to the Christian, and the fragrance of Heaven lingers about his life.

The importance of our understanding God's purposes may be also indicated in another particular. Suppose a prince adopts some one of his subjects. If now we wish to determine the place the adopted one will occupy in the kingdom, we seek to learn, not so much who the subject was or what he has done, as the thoughts and intentions of the prince about him. The question is what the prince is, and what his intentions are. So our position in the heavenlies and in Christ is not looked at in this epistle as the fruit of what we are or of what we do, but as the product of God's thoughts and purposes about us. Hence, studying those purposes, we learn the source of all spiritual blessing. God gave all. He placed us in the heavenlies and in Christ.

Again, this study is important because here we learn the measure of the grace which will be bestowed upon us. We now enjoy "the riches of his grace," and yet it is but the indication of the working in us to fulfill holy, blessed, and glorious purposes. Hence, grace is proof of glory,—a glory commensurate with His purposes and His counsels.

God's general purpose is that we should be blest "with all spiritual blessings in heavenly

places in Christ.”¹ That is God’s mind about us. Every spiritual blessing is ours in the heavenlies and in Christ.² These blessings flow from God under two different aspects. He is viewed, first, as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ; and second, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The first relation he bears to Christ as man; the second, as Son. He bears the same relation to us. Christ says, “My God and your God;” “My Father and your Father.” Under these two relations God blesses us in Christ with all spiritual blessings.

Our position is “in heavenly places.”¹ In God’s purpose we are there, and to God’s mind we are seated there with Christ. The heavenlies is the sphere of our lives and the realm of perfect spiritual blessing. We are there because of the fact stated in the next two wonderful words — “in Christ.”¹

It is “in Christ” that every spiritual blessing flows down to us. All these blessings come by virtue of this fact, that we are “in Christ.” God looks not at us, but at Christ, and blesses us as he blesses Christ. Every delight and every benediction of God’s heart goes out to Christ, and in Him to us. All that Christ has, we have; we are loved as Christ is loved. How blessed! There is not one blessing into which Christ has entered, into

¹ Verse 3.

² For an admirable note, see Meyer in loco.

which he has not brought us. "As he is, so are we."¹

I. To be more specific, one purpose in God's unspeakable counsels, and that a very precious one, is that we shall *be perfect before Him in glory*.

"According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love."²

There is the out-going of the heart of God. "Chosen"³ implies delight in us. Here is preference, and it is in the same blessed sphere, "in Him." "Before the foundation of the world." These words indicate sovereignty, but not mere sovereignty. The meaning is richer than that. God's heart was set upon us from eternity. His love went forth to choose and bless us, even before the world existed. We are chosen to something above the world. We were before the world, chosen out of it, and to a position far above the world "in heavenly places in Christ." We are not "of the world," but are "in Christ" and in the heavenlies.

The purpose unfolded in that choosing was that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love." This blessing is Christ's as perfect man. He is "holy and without blame before Him in love." Christ is this as He stands before God.

¹ 1 John 4 : 17. ² Verse 4. ³ Chosen, see Meyer in loco.

This blessing, then, comes to us in Christ from the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Holy" ¹ refers to character. The very being is touched. The deep principles and springs of the heart are to be made right. The feeding cells of the lily are pure, that the surface may be white; so He will have our hearts holy, that we may be "without blame." We shall be perfect in holiness, holy and pure as He is pure, holy as our Father in heaven is holy.

"Without blame" ¹ refers to conduct. Every thing that springs from character, whether of emotion or thought or action, will be absolutely blameless. How sweet is that word, "without blame." How often we blame ourselves! But God purposes that we shall be so pure and holy that our own consciences shall never blame us, the holy angels shall never blame us, Christ shall not blame us, and the holy and omniscient God himself shall never see aught in heart or life to reprove.

"Before Him." ¹ We are placed before an infinite and perfect God. This brings out in perfect delight all the affections in our spiritual nature. Place us before a finite or imperfect object; after the heart has been disappointed or exhausted itself, it turns within upon the void immense, cries out for something higher and nobler, nay, for something infinite, to fill it. But we are before God

¹ Verse 4.

himself, face to face, and He now views us as possessing His nature, "holy and without blame;"¹ He fills us "with all the fullness of God," and hence we are thrilled with deathless joy.

The sphere of it all and the ground of it all is love,—we are placed there "in love." We have reached the topmost rung of glory. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."² What an exalted, blessed place is that! We are reminded of the last finishing touch in the description of the golden city. "And I saw no temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it." Then no temple walls shall be around us, and no temple domes above us, but we shall worship in God himself—God beneath, God above us, God everywhere; the perfect sphere of a perfect, blissful life.

II. God's second purpose was that we should be *His dear children*.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."³

He does not desire servants, but sons. Here the blessing flows from Him as Father. He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and will bring us by Jesus Christ into the position of sonship. He would fix our hearts upon Him as our Father, and

¹ Verse 4.

² 1 John 4 : 16.

³ Verse 5.

draw forth from our hearts the affections of children in trustful love to Him. The Prince who takes up the outcast would do much for him in simply making him one of his servants, more in making him an officer, and yet more in raising him to the position of confidential friend and adviser; but more cannot be conceived than that he should make him his son, with all implied rights and heirship. Thus we are advanced beyond perfect man, and even beyond the angels, into the sweet position of blessed sonship. Not only does He put us in the position of sons; He inworks the heart of sons. In our souls He places the spirit of adoption, our hearts are filled with filial love and delight, and our lips ever murmur, "Abba, Father." Can we refrain from exclaiming, with the Apostle John, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"¹

"By Jesus Christ."² The adoption is in Christ and with Christ. Only through Him and in Him do we become sons. "We are heirs of God" only as we are "joint-heirs with Christ."

"In the Beloved,"³ is of course a reference to Christ. In a sense it is equivalent to "in Christ," but is a richer expression. "In Christ" carries the legal attitude of being in our representative; "in the Beloved" marks the full blessedness resulting,

¹ 1 John 3 : 1. ² Verse 5. ³ Compare verses 6 and 3,

There is not a cloud. The brightest smile of the Father's face is ever upon us ; for He smiles upon us as upon "the Beloved." Our acceptance is as complete as His. The Father loves us as He loves Christ, and delights in us as He delights in His well-beloved Son. Here is the utmost reach of blessing; we find ourselves in fellowship "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." Realizing the infinite love of the Father, the last longing of the child's heart is satisfied.

This is all "according to the good pleasure of His will."¹ Here is sovereignty. It is sovereignty bringing infinite blessing. There is benevolence in its expression. The good and lovable in His will expresses itself in making us His children and in ministering all spiritual blessings to us. Our blessing is not measured by what we are, but by the good pleasure of His will. New songs of praise burst from our lips as we realize the glorious grace that has made us children, and in the sweetness of unquestioned devotion, we whisper, "Abba, Father."

III. Another counsel of God is to put *all things under the headship of Christ, and in Him to give us an inheritance.*

"That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth."²

¹ Verse 5,

² Verse 10,

“All things . . . which are on earth.” The earth is his inheritance, and everything in it. The mountain streams, leaping forth in purity and singing to the hills, are His. The deep rivers, flowing on in peace, bearing wealth and fertility upon their waters, are His. The great oceans, carrying upon their pulsing bosoms the commerce of the world and rocking upon its waves the navies of the nations, are His to their farthest limits. To Him belong the living things that move in her vast depths, and the hidden treasures which strew her beds. The vast continents, their cities of wealth and power, their plains beauteous with flowers and golden harvests, their mountain ranges raising their broad shoulders to the heavens, hiding within their hearts the iron, the silver and gold, the lofty peaks lifting themselves and with crystal spear piercing the eternal blue,—all are His. And as our earth one day clad in redemption beauty and glory moves on her happy orbit, her song shall be, “I am his.”

“Which are in the heavens.” Look out some clear night, when the heaven is covered with stars, as if God had taken His great hand full of diamonds and sown the heavens with jewels. Tell their number, their beauty and splendor, or stand at God’s throne and look down upon the million worlds that dance at His feet — far as natural eye can reach or telescope can pierce — far as God’s

omniscient eye can see His worlds, and they are all His. Then gaze upward in the great dome of worlds that move above God's throne — with natural eye see millions, with telescope discern millions more, and now with God's omniscience behold the vast plenitude of resplendent systems which sprung from His hand. All are under Christ as their Lord-head and ruler. World on world, satellite on satellite, suns on suns, systems on systems, out to where the last world as a lone sentinel keeps watch upon the outposts of infinity,— all is Christ's. Christ is "heir of all things."

Heaven is His. He prepared its mansions for His people. Behold it, vast and beautiful, with jasper walls, the city "like unto pure gold clear as crystal;" her twelve foundations garnished with all manner of precious stones; her gates of pearl, opening with harmonious sound "on golden hinges turning;" and revealing streets of pure gold as it were transparent glass; walk upon the "sea of glass mingled with fire," stand before the great throne, and ask God, "Whose is all this glory?" The answer comes from the deep voice of God mingled with angelic choirs and the sweet symphony of the golden chimes: "My purpose is to gather together in one all things in Christ."

The principalities and powers, with all the shining ranks, are his. Indeed, we need specify no

longer. "The Father hath loved the Son, and hath given all things into His hands."

"The redeeming work of Jesus Christ was designed to annul this divided state in the universe, so that this gathering together again should rest on, and have its foundation in, Christ as the central point of union and support, without which it could not emerge."¹ This gathering of all things together in one in Christ is now in course of development. And as the divine result, when all things shall be subdued unto him, God is "all in all."

Christ is then heir of all things, and verse eleven tells us, "in whom we have an inheritance."² "In Christ" we find the cause and the right to the inheritance. We are "heirs of God" because "joint-heirs with Christ." The inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, comes to us by virtue of union with Him. This epistle dwells with much delight upon the saints' (the church's) portion as in Christ.

How sweet too! The loved One brings us into all things He himself enjoys, and introduces us as joint-heirs unto all He has. Even the characteristics of His personal happiness are made tribute to the happiness of His saints. Has He peace? "My peace I give unto you." Has He joy? "That My joy might remain in you." Has He

¹ See Meyer's note on verse 10, which deserves to be written in letters of gold.

² Verse 11,

glory? "The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them." "All things are yours."

O the wonderful purposes of God toward us! Already the infinite love which is Christ's eternal portion flows in rising tides of glory and bliss down into our souls, and lifts us to the throne whence we can look out upon "the breadth and length and depth and height."

The inheritance is not yet fully ours, nor has Christ taken complete possession of His. When He does, He will have all His joint-heirs with Him.

Then is the inheritance assured?—Yea. Can we fail to attain it?—Never. The Apostle assigns a blessed trinity of reasons to assure us, and gives us perfect certainty to cheer our hearts. The first is that He who assigned this heritage "worketh all things after the counsels of His own will."¹ If He worked only some things, why, then there would be some uncertainty, but "all" is absolute. He "worketh all things," and the counsel of that blessed will, all full of benediction and blessing, is ever accomplished.

The second reason is, the sealing with the Spirit. "After that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."² This sealing is "an indubitable guarantee, received in one's own consciousness." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with

¹ Verse 11.

² Verse 13.

our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”¹

3 The third ground of certainty is *the earnest of the Spirit*.² We have this as guarantee of the completion of the work. He is the foretaste of the fullness of the inheritance, a kind of advance payment making good the whole. The whole purchased possession is thereby assured. What perfect security! “How firm a foundation!”

Let us never, while our feet walk the earth or through the eternity when they tread the golden streets, cease to remember and cherish the ultimate design of God which lies at the heart of all these purposes. We have been examining a golden casket garnished with jewels, but within we find the priceless gem purchased with blood on Calvary.

All the purposes mentioned above terminate upon us. The intention of God as bringing forth from us glory to Himself, is now to be looked at.

The first and second purposes recorded in the fourth and fifth verses have as their perfect fruitage, “the praise of the glory of His grace.”² Here is God’s deeper purpose in making us holy and without blame and in giving us the adoption. He would have the glory of this grace exalted. God’s heart went forth in grace to us, and now we

¹ Rom. 8: 16, 17.

² Verse 14.

should reflect and praise the glory of that matchless grace. It was all of grace. In redeeming us through His blood and in forgiving our sins we find it all to be "according to the riches of His grace." We taste the riches of grace, and then we set forth the glory of His grace.

The deeper design which lies as the center of the third purpose, is "that we should be to the praise of his glory."¹ It now no longer speaks of grace. It is glory. We have the inheritance; we are with Christ in the glory; and now set forth to the universe His glory. The highest character of His glory is seen in those exalted with Him in the glory. The very final cause of all is that we "might redound to the praise of His glory." The ultimate aim at every step in the predestinating, the adopting, the gathering together in one in Christ, the sealing, and the earnest given, is "unto the praise of His glory." Another has said, "The graces, the joys, and the hopes of believers are declared to be produced in them, in order to make known the riches of His glory."² The fruits of righteousness are wrought in them by Jesus Christ to the glory and praise of God. All the myriads of redeemed saints are saved, as the Apostle says, "that he might make known the riches of His glory in vessels of mercy which He

¹ Verses 12, 14.

² Given to Christ.

Discourse XVII.

had afore prepared unto glory.”¹ And the theme of triumphant song which shall ever gush from the choirs of the saints in heaven, will be, “Unto Him be glory.”

Christian brother, redeemed “according to the riches of His grace,” let your whole life here be “to the praise of the glory of His grace,” and then, when seated with Christ on His throne, will you ever be “unto the praise of His glory.”

¹ Rom. 9 : 23.

PRAYER TO THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, 1: 15-23.

"Making mention of you in my prayers ; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."—Eph. 1 : 16, 17.

THE Apostle has gazed into the counsels of God, and, enraptured with the vision, bursts forth into prayer and thanksgiving. He links the prayer and thanks with the certainty of the purposes of God. "Wherefore" takes us back to Him "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will,"¹ reminds us that every believer is "sealed with the holy spirit of promise,"² and has received "the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession."³

The scripture gives also the human side of the work. It is "after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints."⁴ Here are two of the trinity of graces, "faith" and "love." Hope, with her eyes in the heavens, lingers close by (vs. 18). The Apostle now looks, not at God's purpose, but at the saint here on earth in the

¹ Verse 11.

² Verse 13.

³ Verse 14.

⁴ Verse 15.

exercise of His spiritual gifts. Chrysostom says: "He everywhere joins and cements faith and love—a wonderful pair."

Faith has here its universal character. It ever reposes in confidence in Christ. All God says is accepted, but Christ is the center of His revelation. Christ is the "Word." It is "Christ-centered faith."¹

Faith is never complete without love. Faith works by love. All who are in Christ are the objects of His love. When we can mount up to our position in the heavenlies in Christ, we can embrace all the saints and our hearts take in all His body. Faith and love, Christ and the saints, how much there is in these words!

Much? Yea! and it kindles flames of thanksgiving upon the Apostle's heart. Nay, he did not "cease to give thanks."² Heaven, with the twin-beams of eternal day, was dawning in their souls. Faith had shot its light through the darkness, and rosy warmth had flushed the skies. A song of thankfulness breaks from the lips of Paul.

Thanksgiving deepens into prayer for the saints; joy finds perfect fruitage in longing for fuller blessings to rest upon them. He ever makes mention of them in his prayers.

It is a holy moment. Paul is praying. Draw the curtains, and listen to the inspired longings.

¹ Ellicott in loco.

² Verse 16.

Nay, not Paul praying, but the Holy Spirit making intercession for the saints.

The design and tenor of the prayers are blended. The subject of the prayer mingles with the purpose in making it. The purpose of Paul, the counsels of God and the sweet realizations in accomplished grace, a ray from the light inaccessible and full of glory, shine throughout the scripture before us. This prayer springs out of a special relation in which Christ stands to God. It is addressed to "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ."¹ Christ is man, and as man is dependant upon God. Hence He says "My God," and as a consequence "your God." The character and contents of the prayer are determined by this relation.

This "God of our Lord Jesus Christ" is "the Father of glory."¹ He lifts Christ into His glory, and places us there with Him. Christ is placed in glory above all, and we are in Him.

Special wisdom and enlightenment are necessary in order to realize this glorious truth. The "spirit of wisdom and revelation must teach us." "The eyes of our understanding" must be enlightened. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," but, thanks be unto His name,

¹ Verse 17.

“God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.”¹ May that “Spirit of promise” open our eyes while we gaze, to catch glimpses of the unutterable glory!

I. The first section of this prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, asks that they may know *the things given them* in Christ.

There is “the hope of his calling.”² The word does not say your calling, but “His calling.” We must look at its fullness and character. How great and glorious it must be — “His calling.”

The essence of it all is described in the exquisite phrase, “holy and without blame before Him in love.”³ Christ was ever “holy,” was ever “without blame,” and was thus before Him from eternity in the wealth of infinite love. Christ, the glorified man, is placed in this position, and we are there in Him. We “in Christ” know the hope of His calling.

Christ is the Son. We receive the adoption of children; we are just what Christ is. Is he an Heir? Then we are joint-heirs. We are “accepted in the Beloved.” How rich is that! What more can our hearts ask? “His calling” is divine and perfect.

How this wakens Hope! How it sharpens her eagle eyes to pierce the veil and look upon the glory in which we are co-enthroned with Christ!

¹ 1 Cor. 2: 9, 10.

² Verse 18.

³ Verse 4.

“Without blame,” just as He is; “holy,” just as He is; “before Him in love,” just as the glorified Christ is! What a sea of bliss! This hope quickens our steps in the earthly pilgrimage, and reanimates us for renewed efforts in the Christian life. “Faith in Christ” makes us steadfast, “love to all the saints” keeps us in the unity of the spirit, while Hope, in all the serenity of her beauty, with fair glad eyes piercing to the eternal throne and clad in celestial armor, leads our quickened steps up to the eternal coronation, as with Christ we are ever before God “in love.”

Now we come to the inheritance. The Apostle first speaks of our relation to God and the Father, “holy and without blame before him in love” and “the adoption of children” and now the inheritance, “the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”¹ can be brought out. Christ’s relation to God comes first, into which we also are brought. Then comes God’s inheritance in the saints. What God is, must first be known, and then what God bestows. The same is true for us in Christ; first the God and Father, and then the inheritance. You tell a child first about his father, how true, how noble, how lovable and loving, and then proceed to relate the inheritance, how vast, how rich and enduring. So first the Spirit lifts our enlightened eyes in hope to “His

¹ Verse 18.

calling," and after we have gazed on this, turns our vision to the "riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

How wonderful that the Spirit should speak of "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."¹ This thought is quite familiar, in a way, to the Old Testament saints. "Save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance."² "Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance."³ "O God, the heathen are come into Thine inheritance."⁴ "For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."⁵ "Captain over His inheritance."⁶ Israel was God's chosen people, His inheritance among the nations of the earth. There He dwelt in His glory, was there revealed. Those who would see the glory of God, and the riches of His inheritance, could see it in Israel. Israel was His inheritance from among the nations. So in the Messianic economy, the church will be to the universe what Israel was to the nations of the earth. In her will be God's special abode, and from her will shine forth His glory. Those who seek the brightest displays of God's being and glory, come they from the distant worlds or from the highest ranks of the celestial ones, will

¹ Verse 18. The author is here indebted to Rev. Wm. Dindwiddle, D. D. Meyer and Ellicott miss the wealth of meaning in this passage.

² Ps. 28: 9.

³ Ps. 78: 71.

⁴ Ps. 79: 1.

⁵ Deut. 32: 9.

⁶ 1 Sam. 10: 1.

find "the riches of the glory" in the church. No brighter display can be given, and there is in the universe nothing that God takes as much delight in as He does in the church. It is the last and most splendid manifestation of His declarative glory. The blood-bought church is God's own inheritance.

Faith lifts her illumined vision to such a destiny, and prays God that the Spirit of wisdom and revelation may assist her to take in "the riches of the glory."

II. The apostle now prays that they may know the power which has wrought to bring them into this glorious position.

For and in every one that believes, not simply is there power, at work, but greatness of power, and that "His power;" and even that expressive phrases must be amplified by the word "exceeding." "What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe."¹ Dr. Dabney, in an able discourse, "The Believer Born of Almighty Grace,"² has well illustrated the general truth taught here in one point of its application; that is, at the moment and in the work of regeneration, only Almighty power can quicken the heart dead in trespasses and sins. The same Almighty grace is required and is at work at every step of

¹ Verse 19.

² A discourse published at the request of Gen. T. J. Jackson.

the wondrous process, and will continue to work until the salvation is actually accomplished, and amid the eternal glories we take our seat with Christ upon His throne.

We are now furnished with a measure by which we can comprehend "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward." That measure is the working of his mighty power in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. His resurrection and ascension is the expression of the same power that works for and in the Christian, and there, too, is the model of the action of the same power raising us from our death in sin to the position of glory with this same Christ. Christ was a dead man, and God by his mighty power raised him from the grave. Here is Christianity's rock of Gibraltar, the *fact* that Christ arose from the dead. If he did not, our religion is a delusion, "our preaching vain, and your faith also vain."¹ This historical fact demonstrates the truth of the whole gospel. Besides, the power of Christianity lies in it, and our religion only becomes vital because of the realization in experience of "the power of His resurrection."² "Even when we were dead in sins, God quickened us together with Christ."³ His resurrection, was their resurrection, and His exaltation their exaltation. Here, too, is the guarantee to every believer of the resurrection of his body.⁴ "And if

¹ 1 Cor. 15: 14. ² Phil. 3: 10. ³ Chap. 2: 5. ⁴ Rom 8: 11.

the Head be risen, the members cannot be far behind." He "was raised again for our justification."¹ The morning of the third day forever settled the question of our justification; and when He rose from the dead in triumph, He rose justified, and drew with Him in His glorious train all His people for whose sins He had entered the dark realms and exhausted the infinite wrath of a holy God. That power must have been exceeding great and mighty which lifted the dead Christ from the grave, and brought life and immortality to light in the gospel.

That power raised Him from the dead, and placed Him at God's "own right hand in the heavenly places."² It ceased not to work until He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." Mark says: "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."³ Stephen, with face "as it had been the face of an angel" lifted to heaven, and with eyes of faith gazing through the opening blue, "saw the Son of man standing on the right hand of God."⁴

That energy ceased not to work until He was "far above all principalities, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."⁵ What an infinite exaltation! His scepter

¹ Rom. 4: 25.

² Verse 20.

³ Mark 16: 19.

⁴ Acts 7: 55.

⁵ Verse 21.

bears sway over all physical existence, over all material worlds and systems, over all earthly creatures, over angels, archangels, cherubim, and seraphim, to the loftiest beings who gaze into the unfolding depths of Deity and burn with ceaseless love before God's throne. They all cast their crowns at His feet, and shout their hallelujahs to His glory.

This exaltation is complete. "And hath put all things under His feet." The psalmist sung in enraptured strain the glorious event, "Who hast set Thy glory above the heavens;" "Thou hast put all things under His feet."¹ The Master spoke unto His disciples to cheer their hearts, saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth." All things are under Him, and nothing is excepted save He "which did put all things under Him." Now He sits on His Father's throne, and "to every one who overcometh," says the exalted One, "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne."²

How pregnant with meaning and power is the ascension! It sets the seal of approval upon Christ's life, and illumines His whole career. "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before?" In this crowning event we have evidence of Christ's perfect triumph, and a guarantee of every gift to His

¹ Ps. 8: 1-9.

² Rev. 3: 21,

church. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men."¹ Here, too, we find inspiration for the Christian life and labor. With eye fixed on the glorified Christ, all confidence in the flesh is lost, and we rejoice in Christ Jesus; our righteousness by the law is but filthy rags, and with longing eyes we gaze upon the spotless righteousness which is of God by faith. Seeing the ascended One, we forget those things which are behind, and press toward the mark, our glorification in Christ. Our whole life is under its influence. "Our conversation is in heaven."² Circumstances, even the most adverse, are nothing, and disturb us not. "Careful for nothing," we "rejoice in the Lord."³ Hence, too, comes inspiration for work. "And they went forth and preached everywhere."⁴ Angel voices ask, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" and teach them to carry with deathless energy the sweet message of life to every creature. Christ, thus exalted over all things, is given to the church. He "gave Him to be head over all things to the church."⁵ Christ presented to the church! What strange language! How it exalts the church! Indeed, the church is His body seated with him in the glory. The head without the body is not complete. The complement is want-

¹ Chap. 4: 8-12.² Phil. 3: 20.³ Phil. 4: 6, 4.⁴ Mark 16: 20.⁵ Verse 22.

ing, and the church is Christ's fullness. The church is His complement, and is with Him in the glory.

What sweet suggestions of the unity of the church come to us from this passage! The church is with Christ, His body; where, then, can division come from? Any principle of division is wanting. There can be no Jew and no Gentile; the middle wall of partition is gone, and all dwell in perfect peace, filled with one Holy Spirit.

What an honor to be "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."¹ Christ fills the universe with His indwelling deity. "The whole earth is full of His glory." He fills all, and His glory shines forth in all to the remotest corner of the universe. This was the very object of His ascension, for He "ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things."² What glory that must be! These infinite phrases sound to our ears like voices from the sea, telling of immeasurable expanses and fathomless depths. Is there not an ocean of glory in which we can bathe our souls and refresh our spirits? Thank God for His infinite counsels of love toward the church in seating her with Christ in the glory.

We lift our hearts to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, that He would give

¹ Verse 23.

² Chap. 4: 10.

us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, that we may know these rich things of God and realize this glory, before which worlds fade in darkness and vanish as mere atoms on a vast sea of bliss. Amen.

ONE NEW MAN.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, CHAPTER II.

“Who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition . . . to make in Himself of twain one new man . . . that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross.” — Eph. 2:14-16.

HOW wonderful the truth in the previous chapter! We are blest “with all spiritual blessings.”¹ The sphere of our lives and blessing is graphically described as “in Christ,”¹ “in the Beloved,”² and “in heavenly places.”¹ God’s purpose for us, conceived before the foundation of the world, is nothing less than this, “that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,”³ that we should enjoy “the adoption of children,”⁴ and that “He might gather together in one all things in Christ.”⁵ In Him we have an inheritance to which we are “sealed,” and indeed have already in possession “the earnest.”

How important, then, that we have “the spirit of wisdom and revelation.”⁶ With enlightened eyes we need to look upon and know “the hope of His

¹ Chap. 1:3.

² Chap. 1:6.

³ Chap. 1:4.

⁴ Chap. 1:5.

⁵ Chap. 1:10.

⁶ Chap. 1:17.

calling," and to comprehend "the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints."¹ We would be greatly aided by knowing the "exceeding greatness of His power,"² which lifted Christ to the right hand of Majesty in the heavenly places, "far above" all beings, putting "all things under His feet," and giving Him "to be head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all."³

There is one Head, and hence, according to nature, one body. The church is spoken of in these terms, "which is His body." He has but one body. This body is His fullness, and hence there cannot be "twain," but "one new man;" one can no longer say "both," but "one;" there can be no "far off," but all "are made nigh by the blood of Christ;" and there are "no more strangers and foreigners," but all are "fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God."⁴ All middle walls of partition are broken down, and all believers "are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."⁵ The Jews and Gentiles, if members of Christ at all, are members "of the same body." The immediate aim in this chapter is to show that the ideal glory of the church as united to her Lord is only accomplished when all are brought to "equal

¹ Chap. 1: 18.² Chap. 1: 19.³ Chap. 1: 21-23.⁴ Verses 13, 14, 17, 19.⁵ Verse 22.

enjoyment of the privileges of God's covenant," and that it is only when all are together in Him that "His fullness" (*pleroma*) is "realized and manifested."¹ Jewish exclusiveness is buried beneath an avalanche of truths. Jews would unchurch Gentiles. One sect would unchurch another, yea, one denomination will not commune with another. Here is the inspired answer to all man's reasoning which would justify such an un-Christlike position:—

I. Both parties are the same by nature, and hence no distinction can rightfully exist.

The condition of the Gentiles is vividly described and their walk accurately delineated. They were "dead in trespasses and sins."² There was not a movement of life, and hence spiritual existence was impossible except from above. Life must be implanted in germ, or death forever reigns supreme over every Gentile soul. They "walked according to the course of this world,"³ and had never placed a foot upon the course of the world to come. "This world" of iniquity and sin was the sphere, the "be all" and "end all" of their lives. They looked not beyond it. This world, according to which they walked, was controlled by Satan, "the prince of the power of the air." This world is under his power and is directed by his

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, p. 462.

² Verse 1.

³ Verse 2.

edicts. This is true of the material elements of the world; what about its inhabitants? The spirit that controls the people of the earth is the spirit of that prince. The spirit of the wicked one is "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."¹ Here is the secret of disobedience; namely, that the spirit of the disobedient one fills the hearts of the nations. In such a terrible condition does inspiration place the Gentiles.

Now what about the Jew? By nature he is just the same. Among these disobedient ones they are to be classed, for "we" (the Jews among these also) had "our conversation in times past." The very "conversation," the very lives, moved in just the same realm of sin and disobedience. Their conversation was far from being in heaven; nay, it was "in the lusts of the flesh."² The flesh was the sphere of their lives, and its lusts were ever being fulfilled in their conduct. They ever fulfilled the "desires of the flesh"² in the deepest and grossest forms of evil, and the desire "of the mind"² in plans and purposes ungodly in every element. Indeed, their own "lusts" and "desires" reigned, while no attention was given to the will or desire of God. "By nature" (and that is the fountain of all that is in the life) they were "children of wrath."² There might be difference of privileges; they might be circumcised,

¹ Verse 2.

² Verse 3.

of "the commonwealth of Israel"¹ having "the covenants of promise"¹ and "of the household of God,"² but when we look at the root of the whole matter, they were "even as others." Thus the Jew, with all his pretensions, is laid low in the dust beside the Gentile, and has no more claim than he. If the Jew is saved at all, it must be upon just the same ground as the Gentile. The Jew has just the same needs and must look to the same Saviour. "Both" are "one" in sin and guilt. Both are equally "far off," and the "twain" lie as "one," dead in sins before the cross. Equally do those that are "afar off" and those that are "nigh" require the gospel of salvation. "Both" must be touched by "one Spirit,"³ or death ever triumphs.

"There is no difference." "What then? Are we not better than they? No, in no wise; for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin;"⁴ every mouth is stopped, and all the world lies in one common guilt before God. Every distinction of Jew and Gentile or any other name of exclusiveness is swept away as by the breath of the Almighty.

II. God in His work of exalting Christ to the heavenlies unites the twain in one. God was indeed "rich in mercy;"⁵ the whole work is the result

¹ Verse 12.² Verse 19.³ Verses 13-17.⁴ Rom. 3: 9.⁵ Verse 4.

of unbounded mercy, and flowed from the deep fountains of mercy in the infinite nature of God. The love "wherewith He loved us"¹ was great and unspeakable. There is no distinction in the love and mercy; Jew and Gentile were not known to it.

All lay in common ruin, in common death; Christ went down with love and boundless mercy into that common death, and lay there with us. God quickened Christ and raised Him from the grave, but He "quickened us together with Christ."¹ There was a common quickening from a common grave and upon a common principle "with Christ." He quickened us "together,"¹ and that "with Christ."¹ He raised Christ "far above" all principalities, and made Him to sit in heavenly places. But we are not separated from Christ the Head; we are raised up "together"² and made to "sit together."² There is no distinction, no difference; all are "together"² in the quickening, the raising, and the session; yea, and in the final outcome of it all, we are still "together;"² we are all "in heavenly places"² and all "in Christ Jesus."² What place is there then for difference? When Christ was quickened and raised, we were quickened and raised with Him, and are seated with Him in the supernal glory.

¹ Verse 5.

² Verse 6.

If we were "both" before, we are "one" now, and "twain" in that presence and glory, melt "into one new man."

God's purpose will be defeated if there be more than one body. His very design is to show in the ages to come "the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness"¹ to both Jew and Gentile. By "one new man" the exceeding riches of that grace is made known. It is "by the church," "one body," that "unto principalities and powers in heavenly places" the manifold wisdom of God is to be flashed forth. Here is "the mystery" which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men. His ideal of Christ and His church is defeated unless all can be "fellow-heirs and of the same body." What a powerful appeal for the removal of all "middle walls of partition"² and the reconciling of all "unto God in one body"!³

III. In the actual realization of this salvation, we find that all are upon the common ground of faith and grace. (Grace is a sweet word to the Apostle; it is the very sum of salvation.) Grace plans, begins, carries on, accomplishes, and at last consummates salvation. Works or merit are unknown. "By grace are ye saved"⁴ bursts from his lips as he sees God raising us with Christ.

¹ Verse 7. ² Verse 14. ³ Verse 16. ⁴ Verse 8.

"By grace are ye saved through faith," describes the process when it comes to actual realization in this life in regeneration and holy living. Grace, then, not the deeds of law, saved us. Christ brings salvation to dead souls, and God quickens them to life. Where is any room for merit?

The very principle on which we receive salvation is opposed to merit and works. It is "*through faith.*"¹ Then works and merit are forever excluded by the law of faith. Yea, verily! But how subtle is self. Is not my faith worth something? In that at least I differ. Who made thee to differ? God, and he alone. It is indeed "through faith," but whence your faith? Hear God: "And that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."¹ All the fruits of salvation which the Spirit works in us are not of us, but are given us by God. Says an able divine: "Saving faith differs from every other act of the soul in that it is the result of *supernatural* in-working of the Holy Ghost, mysteriously accompanying the truth with his own powerful demonstration and divinely convincing it of the excellence, beauty, and all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ."² How every vestige of self-righteousness is stripped away, and no ground left for class and distinction. In the presence of such truth there is no Jew nor Gentile; the twain are "one."

What about works? Every believer has good

¹ Verse 8.

² "Given to Christ," p. 57.

works flowing out in his life. These must be removed too; "not of works, lest any man should boast."¹ There is no labor on our part. On the contrary, we are "His workmanship;"² who, then, dares talk of his works? We are "created in Christ Jesus;"² absurd for the creature to talk of merit on its part because of creation by another. Do you depreciate works, then? By no means; God forbid that we should decry the fruit that ripens in the gardens of God. The very design of our being "created in Christ Jesus"² is good works. The whole was "unto good works."² Good works, then, are to be found in the life; is there not some distinction on this ground? Nay, for God "before"² prepared those very good works that we might walk in them. All is of God. The very works are the fruits of God's purpose and in-working. Then indeed every believer, Jew or Gentile, stands on common ground before Him as saved by grace through faith; the twain are now "one" in every respect.

IV. In the blood of the cross every difficulty is removed, and God makes one new man.

The Apostle does not deny that distinctions existed in the past. He indeed calls the Gentiles to remember that in times past they were "Gentiles in the flesh,"³ were such by descent, and hence had been sneeringly called "uncircumcision by the

¹ Verse 9.

² Verse 10.

³ Verse 11.

circumcision;”¹ this, too, despite the fact that the Jews had missed the spiritual import of circumcision as being of the heart and not of the flesh. “Circumcision in the flesh made by hands”¹ was the extent of their thought; they never looked for the removal of sin and impurity from the soul.

That which characterized the Gentiles was that they were “without [separate from, R. V.] Christ.”² This was the source of all their misery, woe, and guilt. Let one be “without Christ,” and he is under God’s wrath and curse, which hangs above him a portentous cloud charged with fiery indignation. “Without Christ” is sufficient to indicate that they are “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel.”² They are hostile to all spiritual life, and know, therefore, nothing of its sweetness and power. “Aliens” seems to indicate some previous fellowship. Did such fellowship ever exist as a matter of fact? Says a great English expositor: “Jew and Gentile were once under one spiritual πολιτεία of which the Jewish was a subsequent visible manifestation. The Gentile lapsed from it, the Jew made it invalid; and they parted only to unite again in one act of uttermost rebellion, and yet through the mystery of redeeming love to remain thereby united in Christ forever.”³

¹ Verse 11.² Verse 12.³ Ellicott in loco.

Having parted company with the Jew to whom God gave His oracles (Rom. 3: 2), the Gentiles became "strangers from the covenant of promise."¹ The several renewals of the covenant of grace and promise with the patriarchs, with Moses and the prophets, were to them unknown, and their eyes were not blest with the light which for centuries had been growing in the East until the bright and morning star rose, pointing to an eternal and celestial day. Indeed, being "without hope," it could be truthfully affirmed that not a star had shone in the darkness of their spiritual night, and that not a ray had stolen across their heavens to paint the lilies of promise on the gray of the morning. "Having no hope." What blackness is that! God deliver us from despair which plucks every root of hope out of the heart.

The bottom of the abyss is reached when we are told that the Gentiles are also "without God in the world."¹ They were denying God, ignorant of God, and besides forsaken by God. Like an infant lost in the mountains mid storm and howling tempest, surrounded by wolves and every beast of prey, is man "without God in the world."¹

"Without Christ"¹ one is always an "alien,"¹ a "stranger,"¹ "having no hope and without God in the world." But blessed be God, "now in Christ Jesus"² all is changed. Those that are

¹ Verse 12.

² Verse 13.

"far off are made nigh."¹ Every distinction is removed "by the blood of Christ."¹ He makes "both one" and breaks down every wall of partition. The cross makes "twain one new man."² There is now but one "body" before God.

The reason is not far to find. "He is our peace."³ In this sweet sentence two thoughts are interwoven as two flowing vines intertwining each other. There is peace between Jew and Gentile, and there is peace for both with God. In verse 14 it is peace between Jew and Gentile; in verses 16 and 17 it is peace with God;⁴ yet we find a subtle reference to both forms of peace in all the passages.

How Jew and Gentile became one in "one act of uttermost rebellion"! The Jews too, slaying the Messiah, "destroyed every link between themselves and God."⁵ They are like the Gentiles, and indeed are more guilty than they.

The commandments in ordinances are fulfilled in Him. There was the wall of ordinances which in Christ's death is fulfilled and hence removed; the result is that "the enmity" is removed; "for to make in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace."²

There is peace with God. Christ removes by his blood the grounds of our enmity to a holy

¹ Verse 13.² Verse 15.³ Verse 14.⁴ Darby in loco.⁵ Meyer in loco.

God, and slays the enmity upon the cross. Now there is peace for every one, whether Jew or Gentile. Thank God that both are reconciled "unto God in one body by the cross."¹ Now Peace breathes upon the world, and sheds her benedictions upon the heart of man.

" These raging winds, this surging sea,
Bear not a breath of wrath to thee ;
That storm has all been spent on Me."

These are the words of Christ as he speaks peace to the soul standing in the presence of God. He indeed preached "peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh."² Through the common Saviour both have "access by one Spirit to the Father."³ Mark, that it is not to God, or to Jehovah, but "to the Father."³ How that touches every heart, and brings out the sweet brotherhood which binds with golden bands the whole family to one great loving heart. The Spirit makes the unity ; He in-works the life which is common to every member of the body. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit"⁴ suggests the same thought. Thus the cross makes peace and gathers both in one. Gentiles are "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints"⁵ in this spiritual realm, the church,

¹ Verse 16.

² Verse 17.

³ Verse 18.

⁴ Chap. 4; 3.

⁵ Verse 19.

and of the household of God, which gathers in love around the Father.

There is one "Holy Temple in the Lord"¹ being erected by the great Master Builder, and He selects for its perfect structure "living stones," wherever found, of whatever race, or in whatever clime: The gates of hell cannot prevail against this holy temple; harmless shall fall each flaming thunderbolt shot by the arch enemy at a building so fitly framed together in spiritual unity. Its corner-stone is Christ, and the building cannot be hurt until the Rock of Ages is shaken and removed from its eternal resting-place in God. The church here is builded together "for an habitation of God through the Spirit,"² and into her peaceful palaces no jar, dissension, or distinction can come. Exclusiveness is crushed by the divine Spirit, and all high-church claims are forever buried beneath a mountain of truth. What body desiring to unchurch others ever had half the rights of Judaism, with its hoary antiquity, its oracles of God, its ordinances of divine service, and its worldly sanctuary? Yet God tore its middle wall of partition away, and will suffer no partition to exist in His holy temple. All such claims are in opposition to the spirit of Christianity, and will flee away as a parched scroll consumed by the indignation of the One

¹ Verse 21.

² Verse 22.

who by the blood of His cross made peace. Believers can sing,—

“One family we dwell in Him,
One church, above, beneath.”

To this we may add another sweet strain, written in the very spirit of this passage:—

“Partakers of the Saviour’s grace,
The same in mind and heart,
Nor joy, nor grief, nor time, nor place,
Nor life, nor death can part.”

“The twain are one new man.”

PRAYER TO THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, III : 14-21.

*"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father
of our Lord Jesus Christ."— Eph. 3 : 14.*

HOW unselfish the solicitude of the Apostle! He has learned of our Master a lesson in self-surrender. In Gethsemane Christ, amid the agony and bloody sweat, in loneliness and desertion, thinks about His weak disciples. He lies crushed beneath the coming cross, yet musters strength to awaken and counsel those in danger. So, too, while His body is tortured, each nerve a quivering battery of pain, each affection for the beloved Father who has forsaken Him an instrument of the keenest anguish; and while the flaming sword of infinite justice pierces His soul, He turns to care for His mother, and to lift a dying thief to Paradise. Paul is a prisoner and lies in a dungeon, but what occupies his thoughts most? Not the prison, not the darkness, not his own suffering, but his heart turns only to "you Gentiles." "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at

¹ Verse 13.

my tribulations for you.”¹ Indeed, his sufferings were the evidence and fruit of the blessed position God had granted them. He could truly say, “My tribulation” is “your glory.”¹

Just this desire prompts the beautiful prayer which concludes this chapter. “For this cause,” lest they should be discouraged, he says, “I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”² Prayer is blessed and surely brings a blessing upon the one who prays and the one for whom it is offered, when such a spirit causes it to gush from the heart.

This petition is unto “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”² The prayer in the first chapter is to “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³ These ascriptions determine the character of the petitions contained in them. In this chapter, Christ is viewed as the Son; while in the first, he is viewed as man. In the one, he would say to the disciples, “My Father and your Father,” and in the other, “My God and your God.” In this chapter, it is power working in us; in the first, it is power working for us. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, and we are filled with the fullness of God according to the power that worketh in us in this; the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe according to His mighty power which wrought in Christ and placed Him at the right

¹ Verse 13.

² Verse 14.

³ Chap. 1: 17.

hand in heavenly places, is presented in that. Permit me to say that in the prayer to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole of salvation is presented subjectively ; while in the prayer to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole is presented objectively.

As the prayer is to the Father, it takes in all. Every family in heaven or earth is named for that Father. He does not pray to Jehovah ; He says Father. Jehovah would have been appropriated by the Jews. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth." Every family comes under the name Father ; here Jew, Gentile, and angels are on common ground.

First he prays that they may have strength in the inner man. How much we need strength ! The devil has his wiles. These are in league against us, principalities and powers, rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies. There is an evil day coming. Our hearts are prone to evil, and we are surrounded by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life. The world allures. We need to be "strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."¹ Hence, this earnest prayer that they may be strengthened with might. His Spirit strengthens. The Spirit is ever presented as the immediate source of power for the Chris-

¹ Chap. 6 : 10.

tian. This is true in Christian work. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."¹ "And behold I send the promise of the Father before you, but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."² Apostolic preaching was in "demonstration of the Spirit and of power."³ The power of that Spirit changed the face of the world.

The strength of inner experience comes from the same source. Our prayer and supplication, which are the very soul of all experience, are "in the Spirit." Indeed, "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."⁴ The Spirit guides "into all truth," glorifies Christ, and takes of the wonderful things of Christ and shows them unto us. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness,"⁵ and hence, "as many as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God."⁶ "The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,"⁷ and hence shows that we shall be "glorified together"⁷ with Him. How clear, then, that it is the power of "the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" that "hath made me free from the law of sin and death."⁷

What is the measure of the strength given? Nothing less than this: "according to the riches

¹ Acts 1: 8.

² Luke 24: 49.

³ 1 Cor. 2: 4.

⁴ Rom. 8: 26.

⁵ Rom. 8: 10.

⁶ Rom. 8: 14.

⁷ Rom. 8: 16, 17, 2.

of His glory.”¹ The riches of grace is passed by. How great that would be! But this is “the riches of His glory.” It is always so when there is a question of need. “But my God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”² We can never fail with such boundless supply. The glory is an infinite ocean with no shore to limit its immensity. The supply of strength has no limit until we have left the conflicts and tribulations of life behind, and stand upon the golden streets of the city, safe within the pearly gates. Thank God for “the riches of His glory.”

Next he prays that “Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith.”³ This is not that they may have happy emotions or sweetness of character, but deeper than that; it goes to the cause of happy emotions and beauty of character, to an indwelling Christ. It is not merely that they may be saved from wrath to come. It is not that they should be Christians in the sense of conversion and profession, but deeper than that this prayer carries us. For consecration, for meeting trial, for conflict with Satan, and for cheering us in the midst of tribulations, we need Christ in our hearts, “the hope of glory.” What care goes out when Christ comes in! “He does not let the dust and cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether.” In

¹ Verse 16.² Phil. 4: 19.³ Verse 17.

seasons of distress, there will be found for that heart, not fear, but Christ; not tribulation, but Christ; not trial, but Christ. "Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me."¹ The whole life will be just an expression of Christ. "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistles of Christ."²

Seneca suggests as an excellent way of reforming one's life, to represent to one's self Socrates, Cato, or some distinguished worthy, as a constant observer of his actions. What would not be the transforming power of the continuous contemplation of the life of the Son of God, which Holy Writ assures transforms "into the same image from glory to glory"?³ The very clod beneath the rose-bush imbibes a perfume. What if the clod could take the rose into its heart, forever to distill its odors there! Christ dwells in our hearts, and brings the sweetness and beauty of heaven down into our souls. Merely walk through oriental groves, and you bear away somewhat of the precious aroma; how fragrant our spirits should be when heaven's Precious One walks through every chamber of the soul, and should it not be truly said that "fragrance filled the circuit wide"⁴ of

¹ Gal. 2: 20.

² 2 Cor. 3: 3.

³ 2 Cor. 3: 18.

⁴ Milton's "Paradise Lost," Book V, 286.

our lives? Well says Drummond: "It seems to me that the preaching is of infinite smaller account than the life which mirrors Christ. That is bound to tell, like the voices of the stars."¹ Let Christ dwell in us, and we are of them that sin not. Sin flees from Christ as mists before the face of the sun. Then, too, ye shall ask what ye will, and "it shall be done unto you." Richer than that; "the same bringeth forth much fruit."² Then the joy of a divine life thrills our hearts. Christ comes into your hearts, and then reveals the precious fact that His "joy might remain in you and your joy be full."²

9' Again the Apostle prays that they may know the love of Christ. "Rooted and grounded in love"³ is the condition of comprehending this scene. The Apostle teaches the same in Col. 2:2: "Being knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God." Love in order to know. We must possess the divine nature in order to understand divine things, and that nature is revealed, for "God is love."⁴

Hence, too, you need not command believers to love. They have the divine nature. Christ, too, is master of heart and conscience, and will teach them to love. Says the Holy Spirit to the Thessa-

¹ Drummond's "Perfected Life."

² John 15: 1-11.

³ Verse 17.

⁴ 1 John 4: 8.

lonians: "But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."¹ Again, writes John: "Every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love."² "Rooted and grounded in love," then we rise to comprehend "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height."³

Of course, "all saints" must be included. There can be no exclusiveness. "Rooted and grounded in love," no brother is left out, and with Christ dwelling in our hearts, all His dear saints are dear to us.

What is that "breadth, and length, and depth, and height"? It is the love into which they have been introduced with Christ in the divine purposes. No words will measure that love. A dialectic Apostle can only say "breadth, and length, and depth, and height." Sanctified imagination can train her wings in soaring to those "heights" —

"Whose top
Brightness had made invisible."⁴

Words will not reveal them. They are in the heavenlies, and are made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus. They are with Him,

¹ 1 Thess. 4: 9.

² 1 John 4: 7, 8.

³ Verse 18.

⁴ "Paradise Lost," 599.

“far above all principality and power and might and dominion.” They look out on this wide scene extending infinitely beyond any limit: they are at the center, but no circle circumscribes the immensity of the display; before them rolls an ocean of love limited only by those shores which shut in the infinite nature of the infinite God.

We have been launched into the infinitude of the love, and now are brought back to a well-known point, the love of Christ. He would not permit us to be lost in those exalted scenes, and hence introduces Christ’s love. Yet, still not to bring us back to narrow bounds. It is boundless; “it passeth knowledge.”¹ It fills us, when known in deep experience, “with all the fullness of God.”¹

Yea, it “passeth knowledge.” We may illustrate. We may say a father and a son are condemned to die by the executioner’s ax. No executioner can be found. Life is offered to the one, either father or son, who will become executioner of the other. Each in turn urges the other to take his life. The son partially consents. The hour is come; lifting the ax, he throws it away, places his head upon the block, and says: “Father, we will die together.” Well are there bronze statues to commemorate such love. But the love of Christ “passeth knowledge.”

¹ Verse 19.

We may speak of the princess, who, when her husband is wounded with a poisoned arrow, to save his life sucks the fatal poison from the wound. That poison she knows will in a few hours destroy her own life. Yet love gives her life for his. But the love of Christ "passeth knowledge."

The mother in the storm of snow and lost in the wild mountains, to the last moment bears the infant in her warm bosom. Now that she finds it chilling, she tears the garments from her limbs, wraps it warm and snug, and when the mother is found cold in death, her only garment is the white shroud of snow. The child lives.

"She stripped her mantle from her breast,
And bared her bosom to the storm."¹

But the love of Christ "passeth knowledge."

He sat "in bliss imbosomed," yet came to save our rebellious world.

"That glorious form, that light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,
He laid aside ; and here with us to be,
Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
And chose with us a darksome house of mortal
clay."²

¹ "Seed Corn for the Sower."

² Milton, "The Nativity," 2.

When looking on such infinite love, well might

“The stars with deep amaze
Stand fixed in steadfast gaze,”¹

and —

“The sun himself withhold his wonted speed.”¹

We wonder not, with such a display of the nature of that God who “is love” being made, that “suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God” and making “full concert to the angelic symphony.”² That love “passeth knowledge,” for its measure is the cross.

We are thus filled “with all the fullness of God.” “And of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace.” Says a great German, the prayer here is, “That ye may be filled with divine gifts of grace to such an extent that the whole fullness of them shall have passed over upon you.”³

The Apostle closes with a great ascription of glory. “Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think according to the power that worketh in us.”⁴ The power of God that works in us exceeds our prayers, yea, even our thoughts. He here names not the power that worketh *for us* in raising us with Christ to sit together in heavenly places, but

¹ Milton, “The Nativity,” 6, 7. ² “Paradise Lost,” Book V, 596.

³ Meyer *in loco*.

⁴ Verse 20.

the power that worketh *in us*, strengthening us, causing us to comprehend the glory, to know the love of Christ, and to be filled with all the fullness of God.

“Unto Him be glory.”¹ Amen and Amen.

“In the Church by Jesus Christ throughout all ages”¹ let that glory rise in thunders of acclaim. Every redeemed saint consumes his life in songs of “harmony divine;” so soothing his charming tones, “that God’s own ear listens delighted.”²

“Praise Him with the psaltery and harp,
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance,
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs,
Praise Him with high-sounding cymbals.”

¹ Verse 21.

² Milton.

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH GROWTH.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, IV : 1-16.

“ May grow up into Him in all things which is the Head, even Christ.” — Eph. 4 : 15.

THE great theme of the Epistle to the Ephesians is the church. It treats first of the great mystery now revealed, of the union of the Jew and Gentile in one body. The church is the bride of Christ, which He loved and for which He gave Himself; He cherisheth and nourisheth with holy care; it is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. There is but one church—the militant and triumphant are but one; the militant, by whatever name you call it, is but one—the one body of the one Head, even Christ. Because Ephesians teaches of the church, it takes us into the heavenly places in Christ, and introduces us into the innermost shrine of divine truth, unveils to us the heart of Christ loving His church from before the foundation of the world. The Apostle fills the cup of salvation at this holy fountain, and gives us to drink of the sweetest nectar of gospel truth.

In the text before us to-day he speaks of the growth of the church; “ may grow up into Him

in all things.”¹ “From whom the whole body . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”² What are the principles of church growth? What are the true and divinely given conditions for her expanding life? Some say one thing, some another; but let us search the word of God for those conditions, and then see to it that we establish them about our church that it may increase “with the increase of God.”

I. The first principle is *the indwelling of God in the church by His Spirit, and the realization of that fact by its members*. “In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”³ True Christian conduct must flow out of this indwelling of God. There is a conduct becoming in a certain presence; a gentleman before a lady; a scholar before his teacher; so our conduct should be as becomes God’s presence, indeed, expressive of that presence, and indicative ever that through His Spirit the church is God’s dwelling-place. When realized, this presence becomes power. As the vitality of the life principle within the plant is the power by which it continues to unfold into more and more perfect forms, so this indwelling is the vital power by which the church, despite adverse conditions, grows continuously into a holy temple in the Lord; or to change the form of

¹ Verse 15.² Verse 16.³ Chap. 2 : 22.

speech, is the energy by which the bride of Christ clothes herself in heavenly beauty, so that it may truly be said, "As a lily among the thorns is my love among the daughters."¹

Witness the wonderful effects of this indwelling. First, there is "lowliness and meekness."² When close to God, we must be lowly. When looking on Him, and when the wondrous light of His countenance fills our souls, our hearts ever say, "None of self and all of Thee." Then indeed is it possible to be "long suffering;"² self is not then to be important; we can forbear "one another in love."² The great cold rock of self has been rolled away, and the warm fountain of love gushes out and flows on forever. "Love is of God," and now self being removed, His nature is in us and expresses itself through us. Next there is carefulness to keep the unity of the Spirit.³ God dwells in the church through His Spirit; hence care to keep the unity of the Spirit. But God is a God of peace, and hence a desire "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."³

This unity is threefold. *Unity of the Spirit.* For there is one Holy Spirit which unites us to the one body of Christ, and then reveals to us the one hope of our calling. There are not a thousand different hopes before a thousand different

¹ Song of Solomon 2 : 2.

² Verse 2.

³ Verse 3.

Christians, but one hope — to be holy and without blame before Him in love. This is the beacon light which guides every one of us through the darkness of this life to the bright home of God.

*There is the unity of the Lord-ship.*¹ We all owe allegiance to one Lord. Every knee bows at the name of Jesus and worships Him as Lord. There may be diversities of administrations, but it is the same Lord. One faith receives Him, and by one holy spiritual baptism we are all united to Him.

But the unity is closer still. There is "one God."² We all in the church worship the same God, and in the recognition of Him we are one. But sweeter than that! Look at one special side of God's nature, "one God and Father."² Father binds the family in perfect unity as with golden bands. He is "above all"² in authority and affection, and hence a true center of unity. He is "through all"² — everywhere in us — through all our nature and through all our graces. "In you all"² — the spring of every joy and of all happiness. How could more perfect unity be conceived than that the same loving God and Father should be in every one of us?

Wonderful unity of the members of the church and of the whole church as an organism! This unity secures its growth. Dr. Hoge uses an illustration in point. In the far West, owing to

¹ Verse 5,

² Verse 6,

severity of storms and intensity of the cold, it is next to impossible for trees to grow to any adequate size. Hence they adopt this plan of co-operation: By instinct they range in a circular forest, ever presenting a front to the blast. A friendly vine grows upon the ground, and covers it often to the depth of a foot, so that the traveler has a soft bed at will, and then the vine climbs to a great height about the trees, and weaves a robe to keep out the chilling blast. Thus roots and body both are protected, and locking their branches above, they stand before the darkest and fiercest blasts that sweep the Western skies, and grow to be giants in this circular forest. This growth is the result of union; while out yonder, the tree that tried it alone is dwarfed into a blasted shrub.

So comes growth to the church when the weak help the strong, and the strong help the weak. Isolated coals die upon the altar, but gathered into heaps, glow with seven-fold power and consume the sweet incense into a grateful offering. How powerless the rain drops! United, they make a rill, and many rills form a river; many rivers pour their tides into the infinite ocean whose proud waves of power none can stay save the Almighty. Men may differ as the billows; but the church is "one as the sea." In her unity is her power, and by means of her unity comes

her growth. The Lord ever dwell in our church, filling our hearts with lowliness and meekness, and binding our hearts into one, a holy and blessed unity!

II. The further *condition of growth is found in the external gifts of Christ to His church.* All ministrings are gifts to the church. All our graces are according to the measure in which Christ has given them. The basis of these gifts is His victory. "When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men."¹ He ascended far "above all heavens that He might fill all things." He communicates to the church the same power which gained the victory, and ministers this power through men as His instruments. "He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."²

Christ himself is the chief corner-stone upon which all is built, and added to this as manifesting Him are the apostles and prophets. These still minister to the growth of the church through the written Scriptures which by inspired pen they left us. The evangelist stands to call those without to Christ. The pastor finds the essentials of his duties performed in caring for those within, watching their souls and ever leading them to the green pastures of the divine word. He must do

¹ Verses 8-10.

² Verse 11.

some teaching, yet it is not all teaching, and therefore the two words are used. Then there are those whose gifts are for teaching only. The heart of the evangelist yearns for the lost, and prays that souls may be won; the heart of the pastor yearns for the sheep of the fold, and prays that they may walk in right paths. Evangelists are named before pastors and teachers. We have developed the pastorate to a great degree of perfection, but we need to use evangelists more than we have done. God be praised for the evangelistic revival!

The object of all these gifts of ministry is accurately stated. First, individual saints are regarded, "for the perfecting of the saints."¹ Christ would have every saint perfect in heart and life, and the ministry furnishes the means. This perfecting should go on until we all come to the unity of the faith, and every eye sees the sweet truth of the gospel as it is. This unity will find its center in maturing knowledge of the Son of God. "Unto the measure of the stature"² of Christ, would be blessed, but it says "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."² That we may be full of all the graces of Christ, is why Christ gave ministry. And also that we might "grow up into Him in all things;"³ to grow up into Him in some things would be glori-

¹ Verse 12.² Verse 13.³ Verse 15.

ous, but "in all things" is beyond what imagination can picture. Next the church as an organism is viewed, and we find the object of ministry to be "the edifying of the body of Christ."¹ Christ wills that the whole church in every part be edified or built up. Again, "from whom the whole body . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."²

Every member of the body has his part in the ministry. Do not suppose that all Christ's power for the growth of the church is imparted through official ministry. We find the word, "Unto every one of us is given grace;"³ each of us has a special niche — we all have some service, no matter who we are. It is individualized. It is to every member of the body. Is your life hidden and lowly? still you have a gift, and it must be used for the growth of the church. "By that which every joint supplieth;" each part gives some supply for the whole, every lively soul builds up others; every play of Christian affection compacts the whole and knits together that it may increase with the increase of God.

It is all "according to the effectual working in the measure of every part."² Here we learn that Christ who fills all things works effectually in every part. You should every one express that inward working, and if you are doing absolutely nothing

¹ Verse 12.

² Verse 16.

³ Verse 7.

for the growth of the church, it is because you are repressing the workings of His Holy Spirit in your heart. There is not a man, woman, or child, learned or unlearned, rich or poor, who is a member of this church, who should not be adding to its growth daily, and in whom Christ is not working to that blessed end.

III. The third and last stated principle of church growth is *continuous union with Christ, its Head*.

“May grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body . . . maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”¹ Christ is the great reservoir of the church’s blessing. “He filleth all in all.” “He ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things.”²

He is the reservoir of spiritual life. Our life is hid with Christ in God. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. Through the church’s union with Christ, vital power flows down into it, and spiritual life manifests itself on every side. The life-tide of His heart throbs through the heart of the church, and she thrills with His life.

He is the fountain of love; in Him it rolls an infinite tide. The church when united to Him has that love flooding her heart and raising her

¹ Verses 15, 16.

² Verse 10.

to His heavenly plane. There is "increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love;" then from her full heart the glad streams flow forth on the arid deserts of the world, and they blossom as the rose.

He is the source of the church's power. "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth."¹ He is "Christ the power of God." While the church is in close and continuous union with Him, she is filled with power, and when she places her hands upon the bulwarks of Satan, the electric power of Omnipotence lays them prostrate before her. Scarce does she wheel her saints into line of battle before the hosts of darkness are fleeing in consternation. The shades of night flee smitten with the arrows of morning light. "Be strong," O sacramental host, "in the Lord, and in the power of His might."²

The body expresses the thoughts, desires, wishes, and volitions of the head, and so will the church in ever expanding grace, life, love, and power express the desires, thoughts, and wishes of her glorified Head. Without the Head she can do nothing; "holding the Head" she "increaseth with the increase of God."³

us, my dear brethren, for our church keep close to Christ and use all the life, love, and power that is in Him for her growth. He is

¹ Matt. 28 : 18. ² Chap. 6 : 10. ³ Col. 2 : 19.

inexhaustible. Have you not, as you beheld the sun put aside the golden curtains of the morning and look forth upon the world, often thought, how many winters' snows he has melted, how many springs clothed the earth in verdure, how many summers painted the flowers in beauty and ripened the luscious fruits, how many hundred autumns locked his golden beams in the waving harvests? yet there he is in all the power and glory which he possessed when first the earth smiled beneath his beams. So Christ shines upon our church to-day — He has melted thousands of frozen hearts, ripened the buds of grace, caused them to blossom in beauty, and beneath His maturing rays, harvest after harvest of souls have been gathered into heavenly garners; yet there, my brethren, to-day He shines upon our church in pristine power and splendor. O beams of the Sun of Righteousness, give us health and growth!

THE CHRISTIAN WALK.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, IV: 17-32.

*"This I say therefore and testify in the Lord,
that ye henceforth walk not as other Gen-
tiles walk."—Eph. 4 : 19.*

THE Apostle begins the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians with a very tender personal appeal. He names himself: "I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles,"¹ and again touches the same pathetic fact thus: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."² He lay in the Mamartine prison a "prisoner of the Lord," or because of his allegiance to the Lord. He was a prisoner for Christ's sake.

He states in whose behalf he was a captive: "The prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles." The word "Gentiles" suggests the dispensation of the grace of God to him in making him, the one less than the least of all saints, the Apostle of the great mystery that the Gentiles should be "fellow-heirs of the same body." He had been sent to

¹ Chap. 3 : 1.

² Verse 1.

preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ . . . to the intent that unto principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."¹ This extending the gospel to the Gentiles was but the unfolding of "the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Such was the reason of his imprisonment, and therefore he desires the Ephesians not to faint at his tribulations for them, which really were tribulations bringing to them the glory of the gospel.

Hence, the appeal is also to us. To us he speaks as a prisoner of the Lord. To us as a prisoner for us Gentiles he appeals; inasmuch as the door of the gospel was flung wide open for the Gentiles to enter God's temples of mercy, he urges us to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, and states as a general principle that we should not walk as the Gentiles walk.

We have here the principles of the Christian walk:—

I. The first principle is that the Christian has put off the old man and put on the new.

They were previously darkened in their "understanding,"² and that because they were "alienated from the life of God."² They were ignorant, and this ignorance had its source in "blindness of their heart."² Life precedes light. There is

¹ Chap. 3: 8-10.

² Verse 18.

first "the Word," and then in Him is found "life," and afterward that life becomes "the light of men." Not having these essentials, the Gentiles soon became in their moral degeneration "past feeling," and consequently gave themselves "over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness."¹ Behold the depths to which one sinks who never knew the revealing "Word," and hence knew not the life of God, nor its light.

Blessed change! The "Word" was made flesh, and He can now say, "Ye have not so learned Christ."² Having "heard Him"³ and "been taught by Him,"³ they knew the truth as it is in Jesus. They must then have put off the old man, and have put on the new. "Put off" being in past time, we are taught that when they believed, they did constructively and professedly put off the old man and put on the new.

The old man is described as being corrupt. This is of course moral corruption, and the genesis of the whole matter has been explained above. There is an evil heart, a corrupt nature, so that the whole man is alienated from the life that is in God. The old man is given over to "deceitful lusts"⁴ which lead them captive. Hence, the old man "waxeth corrupt." According to Christian profession they must not live in obedience to the lust of this old man.

¹ Verse 19. ² Verse 20. ³ Verse 21. ⁴ Verse 22.

What a beautiful contrast! They had been taught to "be renewed"¹ by the Holy Spirit. Their minds must be by His gracious influence brought into a new and blessed state.

They must live as the new man. What is his character? He is "after God"²—created after God's pattern, in accordance with God's thoughts, and is after God's heart. This new man is created "in righteousness and true holiness."² This is not merely negative, not mere innocence, but is positive righteousness. He is morally like God, and his image is restored. Moreover, there is the holiness of truth. We are chosen that we should be "holy and without blame before him in love." Christ dwells within us. "Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." In Colossians: "The new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."³ Whose image? Christ's, without doubt. Ye are His workmanship. So, then, the old man with all his thoughts, affections, words, and deeds, must be put off, and the new man put on with his thoughts, affections, words, and deeds.

How practical all this becomes! The Apostle indicates how the new man expresses his nature in practice. "Putting away lying,"⁴ we are to "speak every man the truth with his neighbor."⁴ The father of lies is no longer our father, but the

¹ Verse 23. ² Verse 24. ³ Col. 3:10. ⁴ Verse 25.

God of truth. We are of the truth. Indeed, we are born "not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever." We are sanctified through the truth, and find the truth the celestial manna upon which our souls feed. We cannot lie. We cannot but speak the truth.

What a beautiful reason is assigned: "For we are members one of another." We are united to Christ. He is the Head, and we are all members of His body. If one member lies to another, he injures the body, nay, he injures himself. Our interests are mutual, as are the interests of the hand and the eye. "The eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee; nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you."¹ Again: "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. Now, ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."²

"Be angry and sin not."³ The passion of anger arises in his breast in view of evil, and when evil is removed, that instant the soul returns to its Christ-like calm and peace. Should he let anger burn one moment after evil has disappeared, he would sin, and bitterness would linger in his heart. The sun goes not down upon his wrath.

¹ 1 Cor. 12 : 21. ² 1 Cor. 12 : 26, 27. ³ Verse 26,

The wicked one is in the world. We ought not to open the door for Satan. No place should be given to the devil, but our hearts should be filled with the truth and the Holy Spirit. A "Get thee behind me Satan," as a sword of the Spirit, should meet his every advance, and put him to flight as dark shadows flee before the beams of the sun.

He who before stole, steals "no more."¹ The life is changed. Industry is a Christian principle, and hence we find him "working with his hands the thing which is good."¹ What a sweet motive, too, is supplied in the words, "that he may have to give to him that needeth."¹ How divine labor becomes when wrought in such a heavenly spirit, and how beautiful the hands that are hardened with such toil! Here is labor's mount of transfiguration.

The tongue is guarded. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth."² Only that which is pure should spring from the fountain of a pure heart. The words coming from the heart should be pure. How the Scripture guards our words! Well it may. We have but to watch the history of a careless word.

"Aye, 't was but a word, a careless word,
As thistle-down it seemed as light :
It paused a moment in the air,
Then swiftly onward winged its flight."

¹ Verse 28.

² Verse 29.

It could not pass alone.

“Another lip caught up the word
And breathed it with a haughty sneer ;
It gathered weight as on it sped —
That careless word — in its career.”

The circle influenced widens, and —

“Then rumor caught the flying word,
And busy gossip gave it weight,
Until that little word became
The vehicle of angry hate.”

The one who spoke cannot arrest the dread consequences as now he realizes —

“That word was winged with fire,
Its mission was a thing of pain,
For soon it fell like lava drops
Upon a slowly tortured brain.”¹

Deeper will work the dread evils of corrupt words. Their history can only be written by a pen dipped in hell. Only pure, sweet words must come from the heart cleansed with the blood of Christ. Slightly changing a poetic strain, we have our thoughts well expressed : —

“Pure, holy words — scatter them along your earthlyway,
As you would strew the blossoms fair that beautify the day ;
Some famishing and fainting soul would gladly pick them up ;
Pure, holy words may turn aside the deep and bitter cup.
Sweet, holy words are like the dew, and as the summer rain
That as a benediction falls, and falleth not in vain.”¹

Our mouths may well utter "that which is good to the use of edifying,"¹ that which builds other souls up in holy life and Christ-like character, and that which ministers "grace unto the hearers." How heavenly our world would be if all obeyed these divine injunctions! Paradise would bloom on every hand, and celestial songs cheer our planet as she moved on her orbit beneath divine benedictions.

II. The second principle bearing upon the Christian walk is the presence of the Holy Spirit.

This thought is stated in the thirtieth verse: "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."² Nothing is to be felt, thought, or done, which would grieve that holy Being or be unbecoming His presence.

In the second chapter, the same great principle was stated in a more positive form: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord."³ This refers to the perfected temple in glory, but meanwhile "ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."⁴ The inspired conclusion is, "Therefore walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."⁵ What a vocation indeed! To be the habitation of God on earth through the

¹ Verse 29.

² Verse 30.

³ Chap. 2 : 21.

⁴ Chap. 2 : 22.

⁵ Verse 1.

Spirit! Such a vocation brings us more than heaven, for it gives us the celestial One out of heaven, and makes His habitation in our souls. The whole conduct of the Christian flows from the realized presence of the Spirit in the church and in each believer. Our walk must be such as expresses this indwelling of God and such also as becomes it.

The Apostle notes the practical results of this precious presence of God in the energy of the Spirit.

There is humility; we are occupied with God; we delight in His blessed presence, His wonderful grace, His boundless love and infinite nature, and lo! self is forgotten. The precious presence of God in the energy of the Spirit makes endeavor to keep "the unity of the Spirit."¹ In the flesh each stands apart; in the Spirit we are bound together, and tender ties of mutual love bind us all in one. One Spirit produces oneness of fruits. There is one body, and though it has many parts, they are animated by a common life, even "one Spirit producing oneness of purpose, design, and action."

When the Spirit is present, then comes unity and peace. The Spirit has led all to accept "one Lord,"² has awakened "one faith,"² and given "one baptism."² All are baptized into Christ.

¹ Verse 3.

² Verse 5.

Then with tender, loving hearts we all cry "Abba" to "one God and Father."¹

The Holy Spirit of God seals us unto the day of redemption. God sets His seal upon us. That seal gives us assurance of salvation, and guarantees all the power of God for our preservation until the day of completed redemption. This strengthens us and furnishes us with motives and power for the Christian walk. Conscious of being saved, and God having sealed this boon to me, I can act rightly toward others. God has pardoned and saved, hence all "bitterness,"² "wrath,"² "anger,"² and "evil speaking"² toward the objects of the same blessed salvation, vanish away. All must be kind one to another, tender-hearted, and forgive one another. The Spirit shows us how "God ["in Christ," R. V.] hath forgiven us,"³ and the life under the influence of this sweet truth is reformed.

We should indeed be "filled with the Spirit."⁴ When in this blessed condition, every feeling, every thought, every word, and every act is moulded by the Holy One. Then does joy flow forth in continued streams of unending delight from the full heart. The one full of the Spirit speaks "in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart

¹ Verse 6.

² Verse 31.

³ Verse 32.

⁴ Chap. 5 : 18.

to the Lord,"¹ and the divinest melody sweetens life as some note from the unutterable glory touches the soul and fills it with symphonies of Heaven. Outward circumstances are nothing. The skies may be overcast, darkness may gather on every hand, the lightnings may blaze, the thunders roll, the earth tremble, friends fail, and dear ones pass away; but the perennial fountain of joy bursts forth as a spring in the great desert of human life, and amid all the storms, "giving thanks"² hushes the tempest into the calm, rich music of God's own voice.

Thus the indwelling of the Spirit enriches and beautifies the Christian life. How pure, how holy, how perfect one should be in whom God's Spirit temples and holds daily communion.

The Poet Laureate expresses this principle in speaking of communion with his dead Arthur:—

"How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thoughts would hold
An hour's communion with the dead."

"In vain shalt thou or any call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too, canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all."³

What manner of people should we be in whom He dwells! "For the temple of God is holy,

¹ Chap. 5 : 19. ² Chap. 5 : 20. ³ "In Memoriam."

which temple ye are." "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you which ye have of God? . . . Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's."¹ Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. What persons, then, would be a church of Christians who realized this divine truth and lived up to its lofty standard! Its benign influence would soon in richest blessings circle the world. She would be a sun with the beauty of the morning waking the happy inhabitants of the earth to behold the glory of the celestial day of salvation.

The same great truths are enforced upon us in the fifth chapter; while as children we are urged to imitate God our Father, by walking in love and as children of the light.

¹ 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20.

IMITATORS OF GOD.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, V : 1-14.

“Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.”—Eph. 5 : 1.

PAUL testifies that Christians shall not walk as other Gentiles walk. The believer has not so learned Christ. Having heard His voice and been taught by Him, we know the truth as it is in Jesus. That all-important cardinal truth is that the Christian has put off the old man and has put on the new. The new man is “after God,” has been created “in righteousness and true holiness,”¹ “is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him,”² and Christ is all and in all. The believer’s nature comes from God as an expression and reflection of what He is in righteousness and holiness, and hence, the life is to be a beautiful image of the Divine. The next principle is the presence of the Holy Spirit, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom you have been sealed for the day of redemption.” It is God himself who dwells within us; nothing in feeling, thought, word, or action, unworthy of God himself, ought to go on in us or out from us. This plane of Christian living is exalted! Yes, a

¹ Chap. 4 : 24.

² Col. 3 : 10.

³ Chap. 4 : 30.

new man in righteousness and holiness and truth and after the perfect image of Christ! In truth it is a high calling. But the fifth chapter opens by lifting us to the very heavenlies, and places our feet upon the summits white with the very light of God, where it says: "Be ye followers of God as dear children."¹ More exactly, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." Moral elevation! Can you conceive of anything higher than that? Imitators of God! We are called to imitate Him in the principles of His conduct. We should be characterized by that which characterizes God.

How sweet and tender this appeal! It woos the heart of the child to be like his Father. Inasmuch as we are of the family of God, we ought to be like God our Father. "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Consider what it is to be imitators of God.

I. Taking the most *essential name of God*, he calls us to imitate God in love. "God is love." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."² So we are called to be imitators of God by walking "in love."

This is not the voice of law. Law says love thy neighbor as thyself. Men lift their hands almost in horror at the suggestion of being called to attain so high a standard. High indeed it is! Yet here is one still more lofty, suggestive of the pure

¹ Verse 1.

² John 4 : 8, 16.

throne of God itself. Here you go beyond law, and give yourself up for others. There is here implied some necessity, some evil demanding devotedness,—the giving up of self for another. We are to walk in love “as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.”¹ Upon the occasion for it, our ruin and loss, our guilt and shame, He loved us with this devoting love, and gave, not His crown, not His scepter, not His throne, not His Father’s house, not His heaven, but He gave *Himself*. Law never asked that. It was love’s free, unmeasured self-devotion and self-giving. In such love we are called to walk.

That love measures vast infinitude. It gave itself for us; it stooped from the loftiest pinnacle of glory in God’s universe down to the bleeding cross; its objects were the inhabitants of yon wandering world of woe, launching out into the blackness of darkness. “In due time, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly.”² The ungodly! Behold the depths! Yet below it all His love reached down and bathed the cross in the blood of Christ “for us.”³ While stooping infinitely for us, it was noble, ever lofty, ever pure, separate from sin, ever worthy of God; for He gave Himself an offering and a sacrifice “to God.”³ That consecrated the offering. The fact

¹ Verse 2.² Rom. 5 : 6.³ Verse 2.

that through the whole it was "to God," kept the sacrifice pure and made the incense sweet even in heaven. Hanging upon a cross, above which gathered the avenging lightnings of justice and holiness, could not stain or mar the One who did it all "to God." Walk, then, in the love which devotes self for others, a sacrifice to God. Note, too, that as the text says, "Be imitators of God," that it is God Himself who is the standard of our conduct. He is the measure of life for us. Christ, who is God Himself, the full expression of God's nature and the exhibition of all the principles of God's heart, is the One to whom we are pointed. "Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us." This lifts our eyes to the white throne of the glorified Christ, and says, Imitate the King Eternal.

How this atmosphere of purity must quench all evil! "Fornication and all uncleanness or covetness"¹ cannot be once named in the presence of the holy injunction. Walking in love we live "as becometh saints."¹ "Filthiness"² and "foolish talking"² now also drop away and disappear from the life. "Nor jesting!"² That, too, withers as a weed of the darkness under the light of the sun; not that there is a cloud in the heavens of such perfect love, nor that its heart is not filled with the music of divine joy, but these light things are

¹ Verse 3.² Verse 4.

unworthy of a being in whose heart immortality throbs, and upon whose brow rests the jeweled crown of God's own blessing and benediction.

Nor into this kingdom of Christ and God — this kingdom whose throne and scepter and crown is love — can a "covetous man, who is an idolater,"¹ enter. Loving self, or that which ministers to self, he cannot live in the atmosphere of such perfect self-devotion. He would shrivel to nothing "'neath the rays of love which stream from the glory inaccessible, and gladden with the effulgence of God's own nature the loving ranks of the blest."

II. Taking the other essential name of God, we are to imitate Him by "walking as children of the light."²

"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all."

"Hail, holy light, offspring of heaven's Firstborn
Or of the eternal, co-eternal beam,
May I express Thee unblamed ? since God is light,
And never but in unapproached light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt, then, in Thee,
Bright effulgence of bright essence increate."³

So too, "ye," who "were sometimes darkness," are "light in the Lord."² "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

¹ Verse 5.

² Verse 8.

³ "Paradise Lost," chap. III, 1-6.

Since we are children of the light, what should be the fruit of our lives? "The fruit of the Spirit"—a beautiful touch—"fruit of the light" is "in all goodness"—good in every respect and in every relation should the Christian be; "and righteousness," perfect justice and uprightness should mark his dealings with his fellow-man in every phase of life; "and truth"¹—truth is loved in the heart. he is born of the truth, is sanctified by the truth, and indeed truth characterizes all that he does. By bearing such fruit as this it is that we learn "what is acceptable unto the Lord."² Walking in the light, we receive more light, and thus the opening dawn of the Christian life increases until the perfect light shines upon a path which lies across the bright fields of Eden. The light may not now to our eyes shine all the way; it may only illumine one step ahead, but take that step, and God's word for it, the pathway will become clearer until the soul comes to God.

Hence, comes an entire separation from evil. The fruits of the light woo the eyes of men and angels, and God Himself looks down with pleasure upon His garden of beauty. "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness."³ Light and darkness do not mingle. The darkness flees before the light, smitten to death by its

¹ Verse 9.² Verse 10.³ Verse 11.

golden shafts. So must our lives not partake of the evil, but must smite all sin and evil with the light of God which shines in our heart. So we "reprove" the darkness, and sin dies

"And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ;
At whose approach ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards."¹

Hence, too, the believer is to manifest the true condition of things. Thus in the Christian's presence, sins appear more hideous, and even the world will not be found guilty of the grosser forms of iniquity. Men commit not in the light many a savage deed, concerning which they would not hesitate in the darkness.

"Knowest thou not,
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders and in outrage bloody here ;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons and detested sins,
The cloak of night being plucked from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves."²

Thus by simply letting our light so shine, we are to glorify our Father which is in heaven. How could you remove the dense darkness which

¹"A Midsummer-Night's Dream," Act III.

²Shakespeare, "King Richard II," Act III.

hangs over these hills and valleys when night reigns supreme? Not by talking about the darkness, not by stumbling through it, and not even by denouncing the darkness; but simply let the orb of day rise in golden splendor over yon mountain crest, and lo! the darkness has fled from hill-top and valley, and all the fair scenes of nature gladden our hearts. So not by denouncing sin, but by letting the glorious light of God shine down upon the valleys of life, can the Christian do his God-given work.

Hence, too, God is our example and pattern. Christ again is pointed out. He is "the light of the world." "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."¹ I get the full light in Christ. The people of the world are all dead; the inconsistent Christian is asleep, lying as one dead among the dead. The spirit calls such an one to awake,—he is indeed alive,—and Christ will give thee light, and all shall see that you are children of the light.

"The sacred influence
Of light appears,"²

and lifts the soul to heavenly activity.

"So much the rather, thou celestial light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate."²

¹ Verse 14.

² "Paradise Lost," Book II, 1034.

Well may the words of the blind poet mingle in our prayers. Light implies activity. Indeed, activity is its very essence. Men of science tell us that it travels at the rate of one hundred and ninety thousand miles per second, and indeed that it ceases to exist when it ceases its rapid flight. What deep suggestions of Christian effort, zeal, and activity for a lost world in the words, "Ye are light."¹

Says an elegant writer: "Follow in imagination a single beam as emitted from the sun. With inconceivable velocity it begins its excursion into the unlimited fields of space. It flees in a right line to our earth; it touches our atmosphere, and is at once refracted, but not delayed in its mission. Turned aside from its direct line of approach, it still hurries on until it reaches the goal. It touches the summit of the hills, and then leaps down to the valley; it glances upon the pale stream, and gilds it with a 'heavenly alchemy;' reflected from the flashing waters, it leaps up again with undrooping activity to gladden the eye of man or to 'kiss with golden lip the meadow green.'"² Beautiful picture! May it truly paint our activity as rays of light from Him who is "the Light of the world." We speed on our mission to dispel the darkness of

¹ Verse 8.

² Dr. J. W. Pratt, "Given to Christ," p. 134.

sin and woe, and to fill the world with the life and joy of heaven.

Another of the most essential ideas of light is that of purity. Of all the works of God none approaches light in its freedom from everything like impurity. Analyze it into its component rays, and all is pure and beautiful. Poetry ever uses it as the emblem of unapproachable, immaculate innocence.

Says Dr. Pratt: "It falls upon the petals of the lily, and leaves no stain upon their velvety surface; it falls upon the damask of the rose, and it blushes in unsullied beauty; it kisses the fair cheek of the maiden, and her virgin purity is undefiled; it falls on the black cloud, and lo! it becomes a radiant glory; it falls on the dark blue mountains, and the far-off heights are clothed in untarnished gold; it falls on the dew-drop, and the greensward is decked with sparkling gems; it falls on the cataract as the dark waters plunge into the abyss, and the foam reflects it back to the eye of the beholder, unsullied by the contact."¹ Thus the Christian is to be so spotless in his purity as to contract no stain from contact with sin and the world, and must lend the luster of the life celestial to all who come within the realm of his benign influence.

"See that ye walk circumspectly."² How prac-

¹ "Given to Christ," page 132.

² Verse 15.

tical the conclusion! "Redeeming the time."¹
God help us to redeem this precious gift! "Be
filled with the Spirit."² Then shall we sing and
make melody in our hearts to the Lord, and give
thanks always for "all things unto God and the
Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."³

¹ Verse 16.² Verse 18.³ Verses 19, 20.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE EPISTLE OF THE HEAVENLIES.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, I : 13, 14, 17 ; II : 18, 22 ;
III : 16 ; IV : 3, 4, 30 ; V : 18 ; VI : 17, 18.

“Be filled with the Spirit.”— Eph. 5 : 18.

THE great need of the church in the present age is faith in the Holy Ghost. The church has studied and accepted the doctrines connected with God as Father and God as Son and Redeemer, but pays too little attention to God the Holy Ghost. Can one believe in the Father and reject the Son? Nay, for only through the Son do you or can you know the Father. As truly can we say, If you do not receive the Holy Ghost, you can really know neither the Father nor the Son.

This is the dispensation of the Spirit. Christ came into the world expressly to open a channel for the Holy Spirit into the heart of man. John calls Christ “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world,” and then states, “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” Just before being caught away into glory, Christ said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” and thereby gave character to our dispensation.

Much is taught us in the Ephesians concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is *a seal upon God's people*. "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise."¹ "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." With Owen we call attention to the fact that these scriptures teach that the Holy Spirit himself is the seal. We are not taught that some operation or grace of the Spirit is the seal, but the Spirit himself. The Spirit communicated is the perfect seal.

The Holy Spirit thus communicated and working in the Christian, evidences his acceptance with God. Peter argues that the Gentiles are accepted of God, and where lies the force of the argument?—Just here. "God, which knoweth the hearts, bore them witness." How?—"Giving them the Holy Ghost," and that, too, not as merely the worker of miracles, but "purifying their hearts by faith."² How clear the statement of the Apostle John: "Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." And again, "Hereby know we that we dwell in God, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

Thus the Holy Spirit seals believers unto the day of redemption or of completed and final salvation.

¹ Chap. 1 : 13.

² Acts 15 : 8, 9.

The Holy Spirit *is the earnest of future glory.*
“Which is the earnest of our inheritance.”¹

Again, note that the Holy Spirit, not some work or grace produced by Him, is the earnest. Expressly is it stated that the Holy Spirit is the “earnest of our inheritance.”

What is an earnest? — It is a pledge for the security of something future. It is the cash in hand as a guarantee of good faith in making the deferred payments. It is a part or pledge of the whole. By the gift of the Spirit, God reveals His designs of bestowing the whole inheritance. He gives us this “well of water springing up into everlasting life” as assurance that we shall drink of the river of water of life “proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.” We taste these drops of bliss, and know that then we shall bathe our glorified spirits in seas of bliss. The whole inheritance is a certainty. Christ holds that inheritance in fee simple and as our trustee at the same time. We are one with Him, “heirs and joint-heirs.” We shall come into possession when we are delivered from all sin, and our bodies lifted from the grave and glorified. We walk the thorny path of life now, but the Holy Spirit given is an earnest that we shall tread the golden streets, and, in rapt visions of glory, stand before the throne of God.

¹ Chap. 1 : 14.

The Holy Spirit gives *access to the Father*. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father."¹

Men are by nature "afar off," "aliens," and "strangers and foreigners." Says the departing Christ to His disciples: "I will not leave you comfortless;"² that is, "I will not leave you orphans." Without the Comforter men are orphans in an orphan world. That Spirit leads us to the Father. The access is "by one Spirit unto the Father." "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."³ The Spirit is the distinctive mark of sonship. But more than that, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."⁴ The Spirit inworks the heart of sons, and causes us to yearn for the Father. And hence, how it lifts us! "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ."⁵ We are lone orphans no longer, but are brought to the heart of God and feel the ceaseless pulsing of the Father's love.

By the Holy Spirit God makes *the believer and the church His habitation*. "Ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."⁶ Jesus promises before He departs "an-

¹ Chap. 2 : 18.

² John 14 : 18.

³ Rom. 8 : 14.

⁴ Rom. 8 : 15.

⁵ Rom. 8 : 16, 17.

⁶ Chap. 2 : 22.

other Comforter," one indeed "whom the world cannot receive," but He says to His disciples, "Ye know Him." Not only so, but He "shall be in you;" the Holy of Holies of His earthly abode is not near, but in the Christian. Again, Christ says, "For He dwelleth with you."¹ He is not a passing visitor coming with light and radiance soon to leave us in darkness by departure. "He shall give you another Comforter, that He may *abide* with you."² An abode is a permanent dwelling place. But we did not complete the Scripture, "that he may abide with you;" add the word "forever," the quotation is correct, and eternity bestows her never-ending cycles upon this precious truth. Marvelous condescension! The Holy Spirit sounds the lowest depths. To dwell in our wicked, sinful hearts, nay, in our bodies, how much He must love us! Mark the word: "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost." "Therefore glorify God in your body"³ is the divinely inspired conclusion.

How we should love and honor the church, which is "an habitation of God through the Spirit."⁴ Thus does the church differ from all human societies. Of two marble buildings just alike, one is the royal palace because the king dwells there; the other is a den of thieves because

¹ John 14 : 17.² John 14 : 16.³ 1 Cor. 6 : 19, 20.⁴ Chap. 2 : 22.

there the leader of a bandit has his abode. God dwells in the church, and hence she is not merely a society, but the church growing into "an holy temple in the Lord."¹ She is the holiest thing in the world, and but for her the world would be swinging onward down the grooves of time to absolute perdition.

"My dove, my undefiled is but one,
She is the only one of her mother."²

Solomon again in poetic phrase expresses our thought,—

"As a lily among thorns,
So is my love among the daughters."³

The Holy Spirit is the *source of the Christian's power*. "To be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."⁴ "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high."⁵ Power comes from "on high." So the water rushes down from the reservoir in the distant hills and with power quenches the opposing element. The street-car with crowds of human freight stands helpless upon the track until connected with the electric motor, when it sweeps onward to the end of the line. Without sail or steam the ocean greyhound rolls in the sea at the mercy of wave and storm; with the steam-power turned upon her machinery, she moves on

¹ Chap. 2 : 21.

² Song Sol. 6 : 9.

³ Song Sol. 2 : 2.

⁴ Chap. 3 : 16.

⁵ Luke 24 : 49.

to the fair haven. No power comes to the church except it receives this baptism from "on high." She stands still with her freight of human souls until put in contact with the electric power of God. The ship of Zion rolls helplessly upon the waves until the gales of the Spirit smite her sails, when she moves toward the fair harbor of the celestial city and drops anchor in the crystal waters. These were the dying words of Brainerd: "Whatever else you fail of, do not fail of the influences of the Holy Spirit; that is the only way you can handle the consciences of men."¹

The same is true of the individual life of the Christian. Only by that Spirit will we be enabled to have Christ dwell in our hearts, to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, to know the love of Christ and to "be filled with all the fullness of God."

The Spirit teaches *unity in the church*. "Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit."² Paul speaks to the Thessalonians of God "who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit."³ Then as closely related to this, "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."⁴ The Holy Spirit teaches that heavenly lesson.

¹ "Life of David Brainerd."

² Chap. 4 : 3, 4.

³ 1 Thess. 4 : 8.

⁴ 1 Thess. 4 : 9.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity ;
It is like the precious oil upon the head
That ran down upon the beard,
Even Aaron’s beard ;
That came down upon the skirt of his garments.”¹

What is this precious oil? When Aaron was consecrated with oil, it was as a type of Christ, and “the Spirit poured upon his head runs down upon the whole body to the latest generation.”² Thus in Him all are made one in heart and life by that Spirit.

“Like the dews of Hermon,
That cometh down upon the mountains of Zion.”¹

Because the dew is “diffused and imparted from one to another is it a natural type of brotherly love.”² Blessed unity of the Spirit! thou openest the heart, enlargest the affections and glorifiest the life. A very garden of God is the church which is ever refreshed by thy descending dews.

“For there the Lord commanded the blessing,
Even life forevermore.”¹

We find enjoined upon all Christians *to be filled with the Spirit*. “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit.”³ Thus our Lord went forth to His work. “And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from

¹ Psalm 133.

² Vandyke, “Story of the Psalms.”

³ Chap. 5 : 18.

Jordan.”¹ Read the story of the day of Pentecost, and you will find the secret of all in the words: “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”² “Be not drunk with wine” — curious, yet appropriate metaphor! The intoxicated man is completely under the influence of the wine, and speaks and does what the wine inspires. Be like that man, only instead of the spirit of wine, let it be the Spirit of the Holy One that shall control your thoughts, desires, and deeds.

“Be filled with the Spirit.” Pray God to fill you, and then evil will go out of your heart as the Spirit fills it. Dr. Gordon says, Drop quicksilver drop by drop in a tumbler of water, and soon all the water will be expelled. Self, the source of so much evil, is driven out. Untouched by the Spirit, the natural heart voices itself: “All of self and none of Thee.” When the Spirit makes its first faint appearance, its desire is “some of self and some of Thee.” Let that holy Agent deepen His work, and the longing changes to “less of self and more of Thee.” But be filled with the Spirit, and the one supreme passionate longing of the soul is “none of self and all of Thee.”

Novalis said of Spinoza, “He is a God-intoxicated man.” Would God our church were full of that kind of men and women — all filled with the Holy Ghost.

¹ Luke 4 : 1.

² Acts 2 : 4.

The Apostle notes two consequences. The first is spiritual joy voiced in songs of praise. "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."¹ Zinzendorf was a man full of the Holy Ghost until he could say, "I have but one passion—it is He, it is He alone." The result was that he went about his missionary services "simply swimming in an atmosphere of love and glory."

St. Columba won Scotland for Christ, and the secret of his power is found in these words: "For a holy joy ever was beaming from his face, revealing the joy of gladness with which the Holy Ghost filled his inmost soul."²

The second consequence is thanksgiving. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."³ Thanksgiving is the ceaseless song of a life filled with the Spirit. "Always" does its gratitude gush forth; and for "all things;" for prosperity, for adversity, for gain, for loss, for pleasure, for suffering, for joy, and for sorrow. The heart is assured that "all things work together for good."

The word of God is spoken of as *the sword of the Spirit*. "The sword of the Spirit which is the word

¹ Chap. 5 : 19.

² Dr. Gordan in address before Students Volunteer Convention.

³ Chap. 5 : 20.

of God." Why are the Scriptures called the "sword of the Spirit"? Because the word was inspired by the Spirit. Over the door of a church in Hamburg is a piece of statuary. In a marble chair sits a man upon whose knees rests a parchment. On this parchment his eyes are fixed, and in his right hand he holds a pen with which he seems to be writing. It is John. He supposes himself alone, but far from it. An angel stands behind him gazing intently over his shoulder upon the parchment, and with his right hand guides the pen. This is inspiration wrought in marble.¹

Because the Spirit illumines the mind and enables us to understand the word, the Apostle prays, "May give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."²

How much every Bible student needs the blessed Spirit! "Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."³ Yea, more. "Now we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are fully given us of God."⁴ Reading the Scripture without the Spirit is like the wild African who gathers flowers and fruits from the surface of his rich soil, and knows not that the diamond fields glow beneath. One stands with-

¹ "Seed Corn for the Sower."

² Chap. 1 : 17.

³ 1 Cor. 2 : 11.

⁴ 1 Cor. 2 : 12.

out some grand old cathedral, with its pinnacles and towers and rich windows. He draws near; attempts to examine that stained window, but all is rough, and through it only rude outlines of the figures within can be seen. He is disappointed. One takes him within the edifice, when lo! against the sky that window stands forth in untold splendor and glory; the carving and moulding around it flashing as though studded with jewels, Madonnas breathe in love to the Holy Child, and angel choirs flood the scene with celestial light and melody. We are like the first, when we view the temple of God's truth without the Spirit; we are like the second when the Spirit purges our eyes to behold the spiritual glories. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit."¹ Because the Spirit teaches us *how to use the word*.

"Full of the Spirit," Christ went to the conflict with Satan. In the power of the Spirit He wielded that sword, and ever used in infinite wisdom the word, beginning each, "It is written."

The Holy Spirit is *the sphere and source of prayer*. "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit."² This is made more specific, "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities; for we

¹ 1 Cor. 2 : 9.

² Chap. 6 : 18.

know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”¹ That Spirit gives us the inclination to pray, and also ability to pray — the gift of prayer.

Owen² teaches us that the Holy Spirit guides the believer in the matter of prayer — “what we should pray for.” The Spirit reveals our own wants and God’s boundless ocean of supply. The Spirit, too, guides us in the manner of prayer, that we may pray “as we ought.” We can under His influence “come boldly” in Christ’s name.

Praying in the Spirit, we have assurance of answer. “Because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”³ We pray for anything in the Spirit, and that very prayer is a revelation of God’s will. Such prayers ever reach the celestial haven and return to us with argosies of blessing.

With what tremendous force comes the injunction of the Apostle: “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”⁴ The presence of the Holy Spirit is here argued as a motive for purity and beauty of heart and life. There must be nothing in our conduct inconsistent with that holy Presence. “Wrath,” “anger,” “clamor,” and “evil speaking” cannot be endured in His holy eyes. “All

¹ Rom. 8 : 26.

² Owen on Holy Spirit.

³ Rom. 8 : 27.

⁴ Chap. 4 : 30.

malice" must vanish. Being "kind one to another" pleases our heavenly Guest. He requires that those in whom He dwells should forgive "one another, even as God in Christ hath forgiven you."¹ How beautiful and how rare this sweet fruit of the Spirit! Is it not the Spirit that gives fragrance to the Christian character, that it may manifest itself in forgiveness? One has said forgiveness is "the odor which a flower yields when trampled upon."

The Persian poet Sadi writes,—

"The sandal-tree perfumes, when riven,
The ax that laid it low."²

So may we ever forgive one another.

"BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT."

¹ Chap. 4: 31, 32.

² "Seed Corn for the Sower."

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, V: 22-33.

"This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the church."—Eph. 5 : 32.

THIS chapter opens with our individual, personal relationship to God. "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children."¹ God is the father of each one, and every believer is His dear child.

Being children, we are partakers of the divine nature, and so are to imitate the principles of divine action.

"God is love." That is His nature. Christ is the expression and pattern of His love. "As Christ hath loved us and given Himself for us," we must imitate this principle of His nature, and "walk in love."²

God's nature is light. "God is light." Christ is the outshining and full expression of that light. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light."³ "As dear children," imitate Him, beloved, and "walk as children of light."⁴

We are His dear children, but need power to "walk in love" "as children of light;" hence the

¹ Verse 1.

² Verse 2.

³ Verse 14.

⁴ Verse 8.

Apostle adds, "Be filled with the Spirit."¹ The Spirit is power, and strengthens our hearts to their blessed privilege of our feeling and saying, "Abba, Father." The Apostle now views believers in their organic aspect as a church in relationship to Christ. He speaks of our union with Christ. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."² We are livingly united to Him as the body to its head. We cannot be more closely united to Him than being members of His body, especially when we are presented to Him in glory as the Lamb's wife. "This is a great mystery,"³ this union of Christ and the church; not in the sense of mysterious, but it is a great secret — God's secret concealed through the ages, but now fully revealed.

I. Though the church is united to Christ, He is still ever pre-eminent in that union. This pre-eminence of Christ in the church is illustrated and enforced by the relation of husband and wife. "For the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the church."⁴ "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."⁴ To understand this argument, we must rid ourselves of false theories afloat in this country. They would make husband and wife of equal authority.

¹ Verse 18.

² Verse 30.

³ Verse 32.

⁴ Verses 23, 24.

Hear the Scriptures: "For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man; neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." So the wife is subject to the husband. Far be it from me to suggest that this is anything else than subjection in perfect love, yet the fact remains that the relation implies the subjection. So the church is subject to Christ, and He is ever pre-eminent in it.

This pre-eminence is implied in the figure of the relation of head and body. The head is the seat of the senses; it takes knowledge of the outer world; it is the seat of reason and thought; it devises and plans; moreover, it is the throne of volition from whence its royal edicts are sent forth to prompt and perfect execution. Thus the head sees for the body, plans for the body, and wills every act that the body performs. The body is a perfect body, a healthy body, in proportion as it is perfectly responsive and subject to every volition from the head. When the body will not obey the head, we consider it diseased and paralytic. So Christ is pre-eminent in the church; He perceives for her in complete omniscience; He plans her course and directs her; He wills her every act, and she is a perfect church only when she does nothing except what He wishes, and when she is responsive to every will of His. Christ's will, power, and life fill the church, and

when we see the church in action, it should be Christ in action, and the church should dare do nothing that Christ does not will. He is pre-eminent as her Head. Is not this pre-eminence also hinted when he says of the church that He shall present it to "Himself"? God made Eve, and He presented her to Adam; but this divine Bridegroom, being very God and of such perfected majesty and glory that none nobler or higher than He can be found, presents His bride, the church, "to Himself."

May we never think anything else than that Christ is pre-eminent. Christ, Moses, and Elias, with the three disciples, were on the mount in intimate converse when it entered Peter's mind that there was equality, and he proposed a tabernacle, one for Christ, one for Moses, and one for Elias, and "while he yet spake," a voice said, "This is my beloved Son; hear ye HIM." And they arose and saw "Jesus only."¹

II. Next, we have the love of Christ to the church and its out-workings. "Husbands, love your wives even as Christ also loved the church."² Christ loved the church perfectly, divinely, infinitely. It was love giving forth of its own sweet motion.

He "gave himself for it."² It does not say something outside of self, as His glory-circled

¹ Darby.

² Verse 25.

throne of everlasting rule, but "gave Himself." It speaks not of His laying aside that scepter at whose lifting, worlds bent the knee of homage, but the sweet word is "Himself." There is not one word of His laying aside the star-lit crown of glory or the royal purple of the kingdom, but it is he "gave Himself for our sins." The sins were in the way, and He gave Himself to remove them. There is here no reference to His giving His precious blood, though that is true ; for He purchased the church "with His own blood,"* but it is more than that. "He loved me and gave *Himself* for me." The giving of life is not even mentioned, though He did that, and "greater love hath no man than this, that he lay down his life for his friends ;" but our gratitude can sing "unto Him that loved us and hath given Himself for us." All that there is in Christ, all that there is in His infinite heart of love, all that there is in His holy and omniscient mind, all that there is in His perfect and spotless manhood, all that there is in His divine and all-comprehensive Godhead,—all that *He gave in love for the church*. He "gave *Himself* for it."

He loves, gives Himself, and next He *cleanses and lifts it for Himself*. It is all that "He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."¹ He finds her besoiled with sin, He loves her ineffably, and gives Himself for her ;

¹ Verse 26,

and now that she is His own, He sets about making her fit for His presence in glory. To this end, He has provided the laver of the word, where she may be sanctified and cleansed by perfect washing. That laver is His word. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word."¹ Christ says to His disciples: "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."² And again, in the 10th chapter, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." Christ himself is the Word, and through beholding Him, she is fitted for glory. "We all with open face beholding the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."³ We shall see Him as He is, and then be like Him, and say the Scriptures: "Every one that hath this hope in him purifieth Himself even as He is pure."⁴ With heart fixed on the glorified Christ, our motives, thoughts, and apprehensions are purified, and toward the same image we are changed from glory to glory.

All, however, is done with one final object; that He might present it to Himself a glorious church. "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or

¹ Ps. 119: 9.

² John 15: 3.

³ 2 Cor. 3: 18.

⁴ 1 John 3: 3.

any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”¹ The workings of His love will be so complete that the bride will in every respect satisfy the divine heart of Christ. So pure shall she be in all perfect innocence, that never a “spot” shall soil the lily whiteness of her pure heart; no “wrinkle” shall ever suggest decay, but in every line shall shine immortal youth; nor shall “any such thing” ever cast a shade over the infinite love which pours itself into the heart, but its well-spring shall leap forth from the ocean depths of the divine nature in Christ as He beholds her standing before Him “holy and without blemish.” All heaven will be hushed when He presents that glorious bride to Himself. There He sits upon the throne of redemption, circled with the rainbow arch of covenant faithfulness; yonder comes the bride, heavenly grace in every motion, the beauties of holiness clothing her and shining in radiant splendor from her fair form, while the light of inexpressible love glows with the warmth and beauty of the morning as she sees the divine Bridegroom, “who loved” her and “gave Himself” for her, descending from the throne to receive her as she approaches over the sea of glass mingled with fire. Now indeed she is a glorious Church as He takes her hand, “holy and without blemish” before Him in love.

¹ Verse 27.

I hear the sweet whispers of that divine love as
He pours them into her ravished ear:—

“Behold thou art fair, my love ; behold
thou art fair ;
Thine eyes are as doves.”¹

“As the lily among the thorns,
So is my love among the daughters.”²

“Thou art all fair, my love ;
And there is no spot in thee.”³

“Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes,
With one chain of thy neck.”⁴

“How much better is thy love than wine !
Thy lips, O my bride, drop as the honey-comb.”⁵

“Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah,
Comely as Jerusalem.”⁶

Blessed blood-bought bride of the Redeemer!
None need ask, “Who is she that looketh forth as
the morning,

Fair as the moon,
Clear as the sun,
Terrible as an army with banners” ?⁷

She looks up to Him and replies: “The chief-
est among ten thousand ;” “yea, He is altogether
lovely.”⁸

¹ Song of Solomon 4 : 1.

² Song of Solomon 2 : 2.

³ Song of Solomon 4 : 7.

⁴ Song of Solomon 4 : 9.

⁵ Song of Solomon 4 : 10, 11.

⁶ Song of Solomon 6 : 4.

⁷ Song of Solomon 6 : 10.

⁸ Song of Solomon 5 : 10, 16.

"My beloved is mine and I am His."¹ Her heart comes back to the sweetest formula of all, "He loved me and gave Himself for me."² The heavenly choirs break forth into sweetest melody, and a thousand harps of gold in angels' hands keep time as they enter in to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

III. Christ's love for His church leads Him to cherish and nourish it. "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church; for we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones."³ He gives all that he has for its nourishment and perfection. He loves it and provides for it as for Himself.

He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men,—apostles, prophets, pastors, and teachers,—and all was that the church might be nourished and strengthened. Paul, Apollos, Cephas, Calvin, Knox, and every minister of the gospel, is a gift to the church and for her good and upbuilding. "All things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas; . . . all things are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's."⁴ Every gift is "for the edifying of the body of Christ" until all come "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of

¹ Song of Solomon 2 : 16.

² Gal. 2 : 20.

³ Verses 29, 30.

⁴ 1 Cor. 3 : 21, 22, 23.

Christ.”¹ He gave the word, and by it nourishes the church. It is by speaking “the truth in love” that we “grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ.”² The church desires the sincere milk of the word, that it may grow thereby. The word of the gospel, and Christ the eternal Word, is the bread of life, whereby, “having nourishment ministered and knit together,” the church “increaseth with the increase of God.”²

Everything in Christ himself is for the nourishment of the church. In Him “dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”³ The imagination can take no flight which will pass beyond His fullness, and all that fullness of infinite resource is at the command of the church. “Ye are complete in Him;”⁴ the church has nothing more to seek. “All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge”⁵ are hid in Him. The church has the key to every store-house of those inexhaustible treasures. Christ, the divine Head, takes all care that by the ministry, the word, and in Himself His body be healthy and growing. He considers her in all her circumstances of weakness, and defends her. Every blow at her is a blow at Himself. Hurt any part of my body,

¹ Chap. 4 : 12, 13.

² Chap. 4 : 15, 16.

³ Col. 2 : 9.

⁴ Col. 2 : 10.

⁵ Col. 2 : 3.

and you injure me, and all of my resources are brought up for the protection of the part. No man can hate his own flesh, but "nourisheth and cherisheth it even as the Lord the church." "We are members of His body."¹ He protects the church as He protects Himself. Saul persecutes the church, and breathes out threatening and slaughter against her, and Christ flashes upon him the terror of His glory, and says: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"² Christ does not separate the church from Himself. For her He never fails. Holding the Head, your church is safe. There may be dangers, snares, and pitfalls; there may be weaknesses, inconsistencies and shortcomings; there may be enemies, principalities, and powers in heavenly places; there may be strongholds and bulwarks of the prince of darkness, but the church shall conquer and sit down with Christ in His throne. When I look at the church, her numbers and officers, I have no confidence; when I look at her pastors, I have no confidence; but when I look at Christ, the Head, who loved her and gave Himself for her, and who daily nourishes and cherishes the church as His own flesh, I have perfect confidence, and see victory smile upon her in all her conflicts upon earth, and at last, "spotless and without blemish," see her crowned His bride in glory.

¹ Verses 29, 30.

² Acts 9 : 4.

“I love thy church, O God,
Her walls before thee stand
Dear as the apple of thine eye,
And graven on thy hand.

“For her my tears shall fall ;
For her my prayers ascend ;
To her my cares and toils be given,
Till toils and cares shall end.”

THE WHOLE ARMOR OF GOD.

A STUDY IN EPHESIANS, VI: 10-19.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day." — Eph. 6 : 13.

THE Spirit in the passage just before the text has been indicating the specific duties of particular classes. Children are commanded to "obey your parents in the Lord;"¹ fathers are to bring their children up "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."² Servants should be obedient unto masters "as unto Christ,"³ and masters are to treat servants in the same spirit, knowing that their "Master also is in heaven."⁴ We know the Scripture indicating the source of power to perform these and all other duties. "Be strong in the Lord."⁵ "Be strengthened," the original has it, suggesting the prayer that these Christians might "be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man."⁶ We have no strength of our own. "In the Lord" is the place of strength. We do not enjoy strength when we are at a distance from the Lord; in secret com-

¹ Verse 1.

² Verse 4.

³ Verse 5.

⁴ Verse 9.

⁵ Verse 10.

⁶ Chap. 3: 16.

munion with Him strength comes to our souls: The Titans, when lifted above mother earth, were powerless, but as soon as they touched the earth, revived with giant vigor. So the Christian out of Christ is perfect weakness, but in the Lord he is filled with the strength of God. Then we have "the power of His might."¹

We are enjoined to "put on the whole armor of God."² It is important that it should be the *whole* armor. No one part of it will suffice. Every part of the person must be protected, and every offensive weapon must be used.

How careful we must be to see that it is the armor "of God." No panoply of man's devising will be equal to this conflict. The circumstances indicate that nothing less than divine armor will keep us safe.

We are to meet the "wiles of the devil."² He uses stratagems of marvelous wisdom and cunning. When he first began his efforts against our race, he,—

"With inspection deep,
Considered every creature, which of all
Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
The serpent the subtlest beast of all the field."³

Still "the guileful tempter" with equal, nay, greater cunning, hides in the "mazy folds" of

¹ Verse 10.

² Verse 11.

³ "Paradise Lost," Book IX, 85.

shrewdest stratagem "the dark intent" he brings.

Consider the enemies against whom we struggle. They are not "flesh and blood."¹ They are above human powers. We struggle "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places."¹ We fight with the vast spiritual hosts of wickedness, the thousand protean forms of sin and its votaries, as they attempt to drive us from the heavenlies.

Besides, there is an "evil day"² coming. This is the evil day of temptation, when all its powers will appeal to the trembling soul, every avenue of approach will be attacked, and the lust of the eye and the pride of life will be on the point of sweeping us off our feet. There, too, are the evil days of trial, of sorrow, and of depression. How terrible they are to the crushed and broken-hearted soul! Verily we need "the whole armor of God." Therefore the Apostle repeats himself, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God."²

We may well spend a few moments inspecting the armor of God given us for the conflict.

I. Inspect with care the defensive armor.

First of all comes the girdle of truth.

We are commanded, "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth."³ The girdle is not for mere ornament. To the ancient warrior it

¹ Verse 12.

² Verse 13.

³ Verse 14.

was the first and most important piece of his armor. It gathers the forces of the whole body together, gives it power for exertion, and makes the body nimble and athletic. Besides, it was the foundation piece for all the rest of the armor, by which they were kept in position. To it the sword was hung, constituting, as it were, a complete piece of armor both offensive and defensive.

"The loins" expresses all the thoughts, emotions, and desires that spring up in us. These are to be gathered up by the truth, to be ordered and governed by it. We are not only to know the truth, but every power is to be governed and brought within "the belt of rule" by the truth. "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth." "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth."¹ We are in the presence of the enemy, and hence may not let our hearts roam at will.

The next piece of defensive armor is the breastplate of righteousness.

We are to stand, "having on the breastplate of righteousness."² Does this refer to the righteousness of Christ? Then we know it to be immaculate and invincible. Not all the darts of the hosts of darkness could pierce it, and from its spotless surface the flaming bolts of justice fly off as harmless thistle-down.

¹ John 17: 17, 19.

² Verse 14.

Is it practical righteousness inwrought by the Holy Spirit? Then how important it is to each one of us! If one has gone astray, there is something on his conscience; alarm comes, and courage is destroyed. One must hide in the day of battle. But living in the holy sphere of duty, walking in the paths of righteousness, and with nothing on the conscience, one stands fearless in the conflict.

Then we are shod with the sandals of peace. The beautiful description runs, "Your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."¹ The sandals of the ancients were made of leather or hide, and strengthened with spikes. Thus one could pass over the roughest roads and stand with firm footing in hand-to-hand conflict.

We are shod with the preparation of the gospel. The readiness, the swiftness of the gospel bears us on. He who carries the gospel message must have feet swift as the wind, for he bears a pardon to the lost and dying.

Yea, it is the gospel of peace! The warrior forgets that he fights, and in joy carries messages of peace. Peace! O how sweet the word to the ear wearied with the noise and cries of battle and death! This peace is ours; it fills our hearts. The spirit of peace dwells in our souls, and the God of peace sanctifies us. We daily commune with God in peace, and hence we should walk in

¹ Verse 15.

the spirit and power of peace. The very message we bear to the world is peace. The coming of the Christian to the world should be like the peaceful dawning of the morning, kissing the lilies and touching "with golden lips the meadows green."¹

The shield of faith is quite an important part of the armor. "Above [over] all," says the Apostle, "taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."² The ancient shield was made of wood, or of wood covered with hide, or at times of brass, and occasionally of gold. In many cases it covered the whole person.

Confidence in God's character and word is the perfect shield of defense for the Christian. His character as a truth-loving, truth-speaking, and truth-fulfilling God is the basis of our confidence and trust. Faith rests upon God's character, on God's whole inspired word, and above all, upon Christ, who is the sum and substance of that word. This is perfect protection against every dart of the enemy; come they poisoned and tipped with the fires of the pit, on this shield they are all quenched. Every evil thought which enters the mind is a dart shot from below. Every wrong emotion is a fire-tipped arrow hurled from the gates of darkness. Every evil picture which pre-

¹ Quoted in "Given to Christ," p. 134. ² Verse 16.

sents itself in the gallery of imagination with the wonderful witchery of an evil genius upon it, is from the wicked one. Every suggested doubt, after God has spoken, is "of the wicked one." He seeks to destroy our confidence, our faith, and hence our communion with God. But in the hottest battle, when the air is all afire with the blazing darts of evil, the Christian has only to "gripe fast his orb'd shield,"¹ and lo! every dart is quenched and lies harmless at his feet. We all need Zophiel warning that —

"No drizzling shower

But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire " ²

will fall upon us, and to bear aloft over every vital part the golden shield of faith.

There is also the helmet of salvation. "And take the helmet of salvation"³ is another safeguard. The salvation of a soul once brought to God is a settled thing. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."⁴ "That whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life."⁵ "No man can pluck them out of My Father's hand."⁶ What a blessed helmet is this! In my battles with the enemy I have on My head the assurance of salvation. The enemy cannot touch one; he has eternal life. Satan can-

¹ "Paradise Lost," Book VI, 543.

² "Paradise Lost," Book VI, 545.

³ Verse 17. ⁴ John 3: 36. ⁵ John 3: 16. ⁶ John 10: 29.

not crush that great fact that nothing can "separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."¹ How this gives boldness in the day of conflict! Having the consciousness that God has saved us, we go on with the head lifted up, and fearing nothing even on the fierce edge of battle. The soldier who knows that he bears a charmed life can enter the thickest of the battle without fear, and can stand where death shoots thickest his fatal darts, or carry his person through deadly lines and over bristling bulwarks.

The Christian bears that charmed life, an immortal life of grace which cannot be destroyed. He can stand before the fiery lines of spiritual darkness or meet principalities and powers, or charge in perfect assurance upon even the prince of the power of the air, and fear not his deadly lance.

II. Let us now inspect the offensive armor.

The sword of the Spirit is first placed in our hands.

"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."² It is called the sword *of the Spirit* because the Spirit gave the word, inspired its authors, and inwrought His own holy life with its every line. It is a weapon of the heavenly armory, and of celestial temper. It is like the sword of Michael which —

¹ Rom. 8:39.

² Verse 17.

“From the armory of God
Was given tempered, that neither keen
Nor solid might resist that edge.”¹

Of course no earthly steel can stand before its two-edged sharpness. When lifted high, a noble stroke, even though it falls on the proud crest of Satan,—

“No sight
Nor motion of quick thought, less could his shield
Such ruin intercept.”²

The Spirit gives skill and power to wield this sword. The Spirit teaches us to handle it. The Spirit recalls suitable passages at the moment of trial or temptation, and makes them all-powerful to slay the foe.

Here we find the most powerful weapon of the Christian's strength. “The word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”³ This weapon indeed is not carnal, but “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds, casting down imaginations and everything that exalteth itself against God.”⁴

Christ is our perfect example, as in the power of the Spirit He wields this sword of God. See

¹ “Paradise Lost,” Book VI, 320.

² “Paradise Lost,” Book VI, 200.

³ Heb. 4 : 12.

⁴ 2 Cor. 10 : 4, 5.

the devil in the wilderness tempting and trying in all points the Holy One, and endeavoring in every way to make Him fall. Mark His calm confidence, as every time with passage exactly suited to the circumstances, He stops the mouth of the arch enemy.

He hungered, and with wily cunning Satan said to Him, "If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread."¹ Forth from the girdle of truth and out of the armory of God, Christ draws the sword of the Spirit, and upon its sharp blade, shining with heavenly light, we read: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God."² Satan trembles while it flashes before him.

See Him yonder on the mountain top. Satan shows Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, and tempts Him with this: "All this power will I give thee and the glory of them; . . . if thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine."³ Again flashes forth upon the tempter the sword of the Spirit, and written upon its blade, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve,"⁴ and with one blow Christ brings the wily tempter to his knees.

Behold again yon pinnacle of the temple; the tempter suggests: "If thou be the Son of God,

¹ Luke 4 : 3.

² Luke 4 : 4.

³ Luke 4 : 6, 7.

⁴ Luke 4 : 8.

cast thyself down.”¹ In the might of holy omnipotence Christ lifts the sword flaming in letters of living light, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God,”² and smites the prince of the power of the air; he bites the dust in utter defeat.

And behold, angels came and ministered unto the conquering Christ. So wielding the sword in the energy of the Spirit and winning the victory, they will minister to us and fill our hearts with the peace of God.

Prayer in the Spirit is the second weapon.

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit,”³ closes this list of beautiful injunctions. We are thrown back in dependence on God. His power nerves our arms with omnipotence. Prayer brings us to the Lord, and makes us strong in Him.

“Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.”

Here is the amulet against every Circean spell; the enchantment against every siren song of vice. Hence the song runs,—

“And oft escaped the tempter’s snare
By thy return, sweet hour of prayer.”

The supplication is *in the Spirit*, and hence the prayer will ever be answered, being according to the mind of God.

¹ Luke 4 : 9.

² Luke 4 : 12.

³ Verse 18.

It is prayer and supplication "for all saints" ¹ and "for me," ² the Apostle who stands in the thickest of the battle. The whole church is borne on its heart of love to a throne of grace, and looks for perfect victory.

Like a Joshua on the field of battle, prayer stops the sun in its fiery track, and quiets the haste of the moon in her flight. It came an angel of God's power to open the prison doors and lead forth the Apostle Peter. It filled the dungeon with songs at midnight and opened every cell before Paul and Silas.

A vision comes before mine eyes. Yonder is the church drawn up in battle array; all there, from the grey-haired sire to the youngest child member. They are clad in the whole armor of God — the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the sandals of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation; at their side hangs the sword of the Spirit, while ever and anon, eyes watchful of the enemy are lifted to heaven in prayer. One heart of love, filled by one Holy Spirit of God, is in all, and one living front they present to the evil one.

In opposing line stand the powers of evil, — principalities, powers, rulers of this world, all the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places; they are under the leadership of the

¹ Verse 18.

² Verse 19.

prince of the power of the air, whose crown jewels light the field of battle with the glare of the pit. Each is armed in the panoply of evil; they hurl their fiery shafts upon the forces of God until the sun is hid. The golden shields of faith are lifted, and harmless lies every missile at their feet. Now the warriors of God, at a signal from the Captain in the heavens, draw their swords, blinding the hosts of darkness with the ineffable light of their celestial blades; they rush upon the enemy, cut them down, and trample them in the dust; those that escape flee away in haste and fear. The victory is complete. The battle in the heavenlies is ended.


But where are the victors? They are not to be found upon the field. Lift your eyes. Behold! With the old armor of earth laid aside, clad in garments of white, with palms of victory in their hands, amid hallelujahs of heaven, they march beneath the triumphal arches entwined with amaranth and laurel of celestial fields. They stand on the sea of glass mingled with fire before the rainbow-circled throne of God and the Lamb. He places upon the head of each a crown of righteousness, saying: "To him that overcometh will I give to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne."¹ God has ceased when the great multitude lifts its voice,—

¹ Rev. 3: 21.

“Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices attuning joy, heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas fill’d
The eternal regions : lowly, reverent,
Toward either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns inwove with amaranth and gold.
Immortal amaranth, a flow’r which once
In Paradise, fast by the tree of life,
Began to bloom, but soon for man’s offense
To heav’n remov’d where first it grew, now grows.
And flowers aloft shading the fount of life ;
And where the river of Bliss through midst of heav’n
Rolls o’er Elysian flow’rs her amber stream ;
With these that never fade the spirits elect
Bind their resplendent locks inwreath’d with beams.
Now in loose garments thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpl’d with celestial roses smil’d.
Then crown’d again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tun’d, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung ; and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony, they introduce
Their sacred song, and waken raptures high ;
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part : such concord is in heav’n.”¹

¹ “Paradise Lost,” Book III. 344.

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